

Book Reviews

North American Indian Designs, by Eva Wilson. London: British Museum Publications, A Colonnade Book, 1984. £4.95.

Eva Wilson's *North American Indian Designs* is the second in a series of pattern books published by the British Museum. According to the back cover, the book is intended for an audience of "designers, craftsmen, artists, needlewomen, teachers and students." If you are a researcher of material culture or native art, expecting from the title that this publication presents something new or at least synthesizes our knowledge of North American Indian designs, read on before you rush out and buy this book.

The contents of the book are divided into four sections: a written text forming the Introduction, a three-page listing of information on the designs, a bibliography and 100 pages of line drawings.

In fifteen pages, the Introduction takes us from the origins of North American Indians and the Bering Land Bridge theory through the development of native designs throughout North America. Wilson has approached this monumental task by dividing the text into five sections each representing a major cultural area: the Southeast, the Northeast, the Plains, the Northwest and a combination of the West and the Southwest. Lacking is a map of these cultural areas and tribes mentioned in the text which would have provided a valuable reference for the non-specialist.

Due to the enormous wealth of material covered in such a short space, the resulting text is extremely general. Thus, beadwork is covered in one paragraph and ribbon appliqué in two paragraphs under the Northeast section, even though these techniques have a much wider distribution throughout North America. The two pages devoted to the art of the Northwest contain a brief reference to Holm's formal analysis (1965), and the remainder discusses the techniques used in making a Chilkat blanket (from Samuel, 1982).

In order to write the text, the author appears to have consulted the basic material culture references. However, most of these sources are not cited in the text or bibliography. The entire section of the Northeast is heavily drawn from Ted J. Brassler's *Bo'jou, Neejee! Profiles of Canadian Indian Art* (1976). Most of the four pages of text are paraphrased from this publication.

The 100 pages devoted to designs follow the same format as the text. The designs are in black and white, very clear and well presented, many showing details of individual motifs. As Wilson states, "the material is primarily based on designs from pottery, basketry, weaving and embroidery" (page 7). This emphasis is clearly shown in the illustrations of objects from the Southwest; of a total of 105 designs, 71 are from ceramics. The other designs do represent a balance of a variety of objects, materials and techniques. The designs from the Northwest are taken from masks, hats, Chilkat blankets and tunics, spindle whorls, boxes, knives and a house front. Noticeably absent, however, is a section on Athapaskan material culture, which produced very fine woven quill and beadwork. The Plateau is also poorly represented.

For the material-culture specialist looking excitedly for objects that have been buried in museum storerooms, there is nothing new here. The majority of the objects have been previously published, some three or four times. Most of the objects appear in the exhibition catalogues *Sacred Circles: Two Thousand Years of North American Indian Art* (1976) and *The Native American Heritage: A Survey of North American Indian Art* (1977). Similarly, the objects from the Denver Art Museum collection have already been richly and clearly illustrated in Richard Conn's *Native American Art in the Denver Art Museum* (1979). The other objects have appeared in general reference articles and books and in exhibition and collection catalogues. This point is not a major concern for the general reader who is unaware of these publications, and the line drawings are certainly clearer than most of the small published photographs. For the material-culture specialist who has (or should have) all of these publications at his fingertips, it would be more valuable to see drawings of previously unpublished material.

Each page of designs is accompanied by a one- to three-line text and a separate section titled "Notes on the designs." Included in some of the comments, although not consistently, are the type of object, one or two dimensions, museum or private collection to which the object belongs, cultural area/tribe, if known, and the century of manufacture. Some designs, however, are referred to in such general statements as "Canada.

19th century" and "South-east. 13th-18th centuries." Not included here but of particular interest to museum personnel would have been the collection documentation, specific materials and techniques of construction. Also surprisingly brief is any interpretation of the design elements.

The illustrations of basketry, wampum, bead and quill weaving techniques are clear and simple. All are from previously published illustrations. The only one I find particularly confusing is Figure 92, which shows the method of imbricating coiled basketry on the Northwest Coast. It is similar to drawings published by Mason (1901, 1902) but shows the sewing element as being too narrow.

The bibliography consists of fifteen titles. Of the works discussed in this review, only publications by Jonathan King, Cheryl Samuel, Bill Holm and one by Norman Feder are listed. Certainly Ted Brassers' *Bo'jou, Neejee!* should have been included. One-half page left blank at the bottom of the bibliography would have provided ample space for inclusion of further references of interest to the general reader wanting to pursue the material to its original source.

In conclusion, *North American Indian Designs* is an overview of native-design motifs which will be of interest to designers, artists and the non-specialist with a general interest in the field. For the material-culture specialist, however, it fails to provide any additional information that is not included in more detail in other publications. With the additional information suggested in this review, the book would have been of interest and value to a wider audience. However, if the designs provide inspiration and a greater appreciation of native art in the general reader, it will have served a useful purpose.

National Museum of Man

JUDY HALL

Cedar, by Hilary Stewart. Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1984.
192 pp.

Cedar is another of Hilary Stewart's attractive appreciations of traditional northwest coast material culture. Readers acquainted with the author's previous books (*Artifacts of the Northwest Coast Indians*, *Indian Fishing*, etc.) will find the format and style of this book familiar. As usual, the book is competently researched and elegantly packaged. It is aimed at non-specialist readers, and that audience will find it both informative and interesting. A reader with a specialist's knowledge of a Northwest Coast group or some aspect of material culture may find that

it has troublesome over-generalizations; this problem will be discussed in greater detail after a brief summary of the contents.

Following a short vignette alluding to the ubiquity of cedar products in the lives of the aboriginal peoples of the Northwest Coast, the first substantive chapter is a description of the characteristics and growth patterns of red and yellow cedar trees. This chapter includes brief mention of archaeological evidence of early uses of cedar among Northwest Coast peoples and concludes with two brief legend adaptations.

The next four chapters are organized according to the four types of raw material from the cedar tree utilized in traditional native technologies: wood, bark, withes and roots. The section on woodworking (which comprises roughly half of the book's 165 content pages), is more thorough than the subsequent chapters, providing detailed information on both the tools and techniques used and the objects created. The author's drawings, which are both clear and profuse, are generally of specific artifacts from documented collections or photographs; most of the descriptions include at least tribal ascription and a code indicating the present location of the object or source description.

The next three chapters provide much less information on construction techniques and regional/tribal styles. While a careful reader could get a good feel for the difference between southern and northern regional house types or canoes from the previous chapter, it would not be possible to do the same with the material on basketry, which is also regionally differentiated along the coast. The chapter on bark does illustrate a large variety of objects, and it covers a number of procedures that are not usually described in easily available sources, such as rope-making and the weaving of shredded bark fibre cloaks.

The short chapter on withes also illustrates a large number of objects and techniques, including heavy basketry, ropes and tree climbing equipment. The chapter on roots is disappointing, a mere six pages, with no mention of the fine northern twined objects such as Tlingit baskets or Haida "potlatch ring" hats. The earlier chapters also gave more attention to objects from the more southerly groups along the coast, but it is most noticeable in these omissions. The final chapter is a brief summary of the "spiritual realms" of cedar trees, including beliefs about the cedar as well as medicinal and ritual uses.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this review, readers with a specialist's interest in Northwest Coast material culture may find this book irritating in places. Perhaps because she is trying not to be pedantic, Stewart sometimes omits mention of sources in the text and avoids dis-

cussion of minor but significant ethnographic distinctions by generalizing about patterns. Clarifications and quibbles are not even relegated to footnote status, since there are no footnotes at all in the volume.

The first problem seems to be an issue of scholarly versus less formal procedures for acknowledging sources of information. As a minor example, on page 120 Stewart gives no reference in the text when she says that to skim eulachon oil the Tsimshian "used a U-shaped strip of cedar bark to gather and scoop it up." On the facing page there is an illustration of a skimmer, attributed to the Tlingit, with a reference code for Krause's monograph. If a reader were specifically interested in either the technology of grease production or the material culture of the Tsimshian, s/he would have to check whether Krause indicated that the Tsimshian used the same technique as the Tlingit, and/or search the general bibliography for other references that might be relevant. There are numerous examples of similar omissions, most of them even more opaque than that mentioned. For example, on page 61 Stewart indicates the price in trade blankets for such jobs as digging post holes, working on roof beams and making roof planks for a house; she doesn't cite a source or date for the information, and only by indirect inference can a reader guess that she was probably referring to the Haida; searching for further information on the topic would be arduous indeed. If the bibliography had been annotated the omission of sources in the text per se would not be so irksome, but this was not done.

The problem of over-generalization is also apparent in minor ways throughout the volume. For example, on page 30 Stewart says that a man making his tools "often sculptured the handles with intricate crest figures." This may have been accurate for some of the groups, but crests, at least for the Tsimshian, were a very special and restricted set of representations, which according to Halpin's analysis of Tsimshian crests (1973, UBC PhD dissertation), would not have been carved on tools. It is also unlikely that a man would have carved his own crest design on anything among the Tsimshian, since crest carvings were commissioned from members of an individual's father's clan. A discussion of the varieties of social organization found among the Northwest Coast groups and their uses of crests is certainly beyond the scope of Stewart's book; however, she could have improved its usefulness for scholarly purposes if she had omitted such terms or acknowledged that they are complex or contentious. In the example mentioned, the word "crest" could easily have been replaced by "intricate carved figures."

The types of omissions and over-generalizations mentioned above are the most problematic aspect of the book for an academic reader, but then I have already noted that it isn't really directed to the academic reader. The tone of the volume is appropriately set in the brief Foreword by Bill Reid when he praises Stewart for accomplishing "the difficult feat of telling of the wonder of the cedar tree with the same loving awe experienced by us for whom it forms a constant part of our lives. . . ." It should be appreciated on its own terms, and on those terms it is a fine contribution and a very good read.

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MARGARET SEGUIN

The Tsimshian: Images of the Past: Views for the Present, edited by Margaret Seguin. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984. xx + 343 pp., 40 b/w photographs, 27 drawings, 5 maps. \$37.95 (cloth).

The Tsimshian is a collection of fifteen articles, written by twelve authors, dealing with the Tsimshian Indians of the northwest coast of British Columbia. Most of the articles were first presented at a conference held in 1979 in the Southern Tsimshian village of Hartley Bay; others have been added later to expand particular subject areas.

The articles are grouped into four major categories: "Recent Tsimshian Ethnohistory," "Reconstructed Social Organization," "World View and Shamanism," and "Material Culture." The editor, M. Seguin, provides an Introduction, and the book ends with an Afterword by C. Farber.

The articles contain a mixture of description and theory, ranging from Laforet's paper on Tsimshian baskets (complete with a number of photographs) to Seguin's critique of psychoanalytical interpretations of potlatching. Some of the articles lead the reader smoothly from a general overview of a topic (e.g., Miller), while others (e.g., G. McDonald) engage the reader in the thick of an issue without too much of a warmup. The range of topics covered is perhaps too great to be tied together meaningfully in a single thematic way, although the comments in the introductory paper indicate that the excitement of anthropologists presenting data and interpretations on the Tsimshian at a conference held in a Tsimshian village bridges substantive differences.

Even though the title of the book emphasizes the Tsimshian as a whole, the focus of the contents is on the Southern Tsimshian, with fewer papers on the Coast Tsimshian, one on the Gitksan (G. McDonald), and none on the Nishga. As such, those readers who want specific information on the Southern Tsimshian and some good general overviews of Tsimshian social organization will be satisfied; those looking for the same kind of coverage for the other Tsimshian-speaking groups will have to spend some time going through the bibliography. However, conclusions reached about how Tsimshian society operates, drawn from the Southern Tsimshian data, will be useful for comparative purposes.

The Contents

Margaret Seguin's "Introduction" provides both a context for the articles in the collection, and a succinct overview of Tsimshian culture and society. She stresses that the collection is united by two elements: "a desire for contextualization, both that of culture, and that of the literature; and a concern for locating the particular genius of the Tsimshian" (p. ix). Seguin also points out the intellectual debt contemporary researchers owe to the early ethnographers like Franz Boas (but see J. McDonald's article), William Beynon, Marius Barbeau, Henry Tate and others.

Seguin's overview describes traditional Tsimshian territory, linguistic subdivisions, social organizations, political structures, ceremonies and post-European contact changes. She seems to speak for many of the contributors by commenting that "the evidence presented in the papers in this volume supports the view that Tsimshian were full owners of their lands, which they have never relinquished" (p. xvi).

Ken Campbell's article, "Hartley Bay, British Columbia: A History," leads off the section on "Recent Tsimshian Ethnohistory," and describes the history of the Kitka'ata group of Southern Tsimshian. These ancestors of the Hartley Bay people had left their original settlement in the 1860s and 1870s to reside in the mission village of Metlakatla, to the north, but some eventually returned to their homeland in 1887. Campbell uses archival and historical accounts, coupled with interview data, to provide a picture of Kitka'ata villages and movements from the 1700s through to 1979, and their involvement in the fur trade, canneries, logging, and eventually commercial fishing. Campbell also describes the concerns of the Hartley Bay people in the late 1800s and early 1900s over their land rights.

Jay Miller's article, "Feasting with the Southern Tsimshian," describes variations of, and terms used for, Tsimshian "potlatching" and feasts. He concludes that the ceremony called *yaokw* "best fits with the general notion of what constitutes a potlatch" (p. 28). Miller points out how the transfer of names through formal ceremonies, crucial to Tsimshian society, was maintained in spite of economic, political and demographic changes and pressures. The flu epidemic of 1918 is mentioned a number of times, undoubtedly because it is still in the memory of the elders. Miller's description of the general terms and practices of a variety of Tsimshian ceremonies is excellent, and neatly leads the reader into his detailed account of feasts held in Hartley Bay in 1978 and 1979. Miller concludes his article with a call to view Tsimshian ceremonies as adaptive, able to utilize contemporary resources to meet exchange obligations, yet retain the fundamental integrity of the system. Miller (p. 28) tantalizes the reader with his comment about the *yaokw*, saying that "it was quickly suppressed by missionaries and government agents over a century ago." But this leaves me wanting to know exactly how this suppression was accomplished, and how effective it really was. In a number of places, potlatching simply went underground.

James McDonald's article, "Images of the Nineteenth Century Economy of the Tsimshian," opens the ethnohistory section, and argues that traditional ethnographic accounts of the nineteenth century Tsimshian underrepresent the extent to which the Tsimshian were involved in the capitalist political economy. The article indicates that Boas, and others, did not draw out the nineteenth century context of Tsimshian economy and society. Indeed, Boas (pp. 40-41) is described as "a consultant hired to report on the contemporary conditions of the Indians, in order to avoid potential hostilities during economic development." McDonald cites Knight's (1978) study as the starting point for his own research. McDonald's argument is weakened by his use of historians' uses of ethnographic material — rather than the actual ethnographies. He especially criticizes Usher (1974), who is not an anthropologist. But his basic premise is well taken.

Marjorie Halpin's "Feast Names at Hartley Bay" opens the section on "Reconstructed Social Organization." The article describes Halpin's research in 1980 to compare present lineage names at Hartley Bay with those contained in a list collected in 1939 by William Beynon. The outcome, according to Halpin, was a final list of 236 names, with tape recordings and notes, and an understanding of the strategies involved in acquiring and transferring a name. Halpin's description of the value of

names, how names are managed (especially through strategic marriages and adoption) is an excellent account of what goes on “behind the scenes.”

In the next article, “The Epic of *Nekt*: The Archaeology of Metaphor,” George McDonald describes two connected activities: (1) the archaeological excavation of a fortified site (Kitwanga Hill Fort), and its declaration as National Historic Site, and (2) the epic accounts of a warrior, *Nekt*, who at one time likely had a fort at Kitwanga in the late 1700s and early 1800s (p. 68). McDonald indicates that the historical feats of *Nekt* have merged with mythology in stories which are similar to the better known *Azdiwal*. McDonald also maps out and describes northern interior trading routes, and speculates about the flow of trade goods (especially iron) and the distribution of forts. Forts were built at strategic locations along trade routes in order to control the flow of rare goods. McDonald concludes (p. 79) that almost all of the forts had been abandoned by the 1830s. He locates the origin of the forts themselves in the destabilization of population and territory in the early 1700s, and the emergence of endemic warfare — “motivated by the desire to control a new and scarce valuable resource” — iron, guns, and knives. Kitwanga Fort is presented as a product of those turbulent times, with *Nekt* as one of the “local strong men” whose exploits became the stuff of legend. Firearms spelled an end to this brief fort era, and *Nekt* himself was shot “by a confederacy of Nass River chiefs” (p. 81) with one of the area’s first rifles. McDonald (p. 81) concludes: “These new weapons quickly spelled the end to these forts which, with warriors in suits of armour, hilltop forts, and elaborate defences, constitutes a unique chapter of Canadian history.” I found this article difficult to follow; perhaps a rearrangement of sections would have given it a better flow. The reader is also somewhat hampered by not having a general overview of the archaeological record for the Tsimshian area — something which would put this account into context.

Louis Allaire, “A Native Mental Map of Coast Tsimshian Villages,” analyzes variations of a single myth to indicate how the order in which villages are named reflects the ranking of the villages. Allaire’s premise (p. 85) is that because of Tsimshian emphasis on ranking and hierarchy, the sequence “represented the actual ranking of individual villages by order of prestige in potlatch ceremonies.” The myths further link villages with their form of prestation, falling into two groups: those bringing food, and those bringing food containers (p. 86). Each of these groupings is further subdivided, and all together form “a definite mental map-

ping of distinctive territorial groups." Coast and river groups are symbolically separated, as are Tsimshian and non-Tsimshian. Out of Allaire's reading of the myths comes the suggestion that at one time a separate population centre existed in the middle Skeena River. Allaire's analysis is provocative, and points to some interesting uses of mythic content. However, his chart of the sequence of village names (p. 85) is different from the order given in the myths — villages 4 and 5 should be reversed.

John Dunn's "International Matri-Moieties: The North Pacific Province of the North Pacific Coast" suggests that relationships between the Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian can be mapped onto a kinship schema, or mental map. In a detailed argument, Dunn argues that to the Tsimshian, the Tlingit are "children of the clan" and the Haida are seen as the "fathers of the clan," creating an "international structure governing noble interethnic alliances [in which] whole families and whole societies came into kinship relationships with one another" (p. 102). Through his analysis of kinship terms from these groups, Dunn concludes that from the Tsimshian position, the Haida are symbolically male, elder, animal, supernatural, unfamiliar and "father"; the Tlingit are symbolically female, younger, human, known (i.e., related) and "little sister." Thus the Tsimshian can view the whole region in terms of how other ethnic groups are mapped onto their kinship and descent model.

The section on social organization concludes with Margaret Seguin's "Lest There Be No Salmon: Symbols in Traditional Tsimshian Potlatch," which examines the symbols in Tsimshian potlatching. To Seguin (p. 111), the Tsimshian matrilineage, *waab*, or "House," is symbolically a box or container, which holds the wealth of the descent group. A feast empties the House, a necessary prerequisite to obtaining a *sm'oigyeyet*, or "real person," name. Seguin leads the reader through the symbols of power and feasting, and concludes with a critique of psychoanalytical interpretations of feasting. The analysis leads one readily to accept Seguin's premise that the Tsimshian feast known as the *yaokw* has an "internal symbolic logic" (p. 130).

The symbolically complex world of shamanism and power in Tsimshian society is described by Marie-Francois Guedon in two articles which should be read together. In the first article, "An introduction to Tsimshian World View and its Practitioners," Guedon focuses on the concepts of *halait* and *naxnox*, both of which defy simple translations into English. For example, the polysemantic term *halait* has been translated as dance, dancer, dancing, medicine man, shaman, initiate, something special, something different, and so on (p. 138). The associ-

ated concept of *naxnox* “applies to any being, event, or ability which appears to exhibit or express some form of ‘power,’ anything connected with abnormal or the extraordinary” (p. 139). Guedon describes two ways of seeking and using supernatural power in Tsimshian society: the individual vision quests of shamans, and the public power quests of chiefs. In her second article, “Tsimshian Shamanic Images,” Guedon elaborates on shamanism, describing how one becomes a shaman, the context of shamanic practices, techniques, songs, myths, paraphernalia, and healing procedures.

Audrey Shane’s “Power in Their Hands: The Gitsontk” follows Guedon’s first paper, although it should perhaps be read after both of Guedon’s. Drawing on unpublished Beynon notes and other material, Shane seeks to show the widespread existence of a category of artists and craftspeople, called *gitsontk*, who occupied a position in Tsimshian society between chiefs and commoners. As Shane (p. 162) points out, the *gitsontk*’s role was clothed in secrecy, leading to scattered and elliptical references in the literature. Identifying the *gitsontk* requires some assumptions. For example, Shane (p. 165) argues that since “only the *gitsontk* could carve *naxnox* material . . . it follows therefore that the name of a *naxnox* carver is the name of a *gitsontk*.” In the appendix to her article, Shane provides a list of Coast Tsimshian, Nishgan and Gitsan *gitsontk*.

In the last section (“Material Culture”), Andrea Laforet’s “Tsimshian Basketry” describes “the principal forms and technical characteristics of Tsimshian basketry,” based on various museum collections. Some types and techniques are common to the area (Coast Tsimshian, Nishga, Gitsan), while others (e.g., the Nass River oolachon basket) had a more localized manufacture. Laforet (p. 249) concludes that while Tsimshian basketry was “distinctive in style,” there also were stylistic differences between the coastal and upriver groups (Gitsan), with the Nishga sharing in both. Laforet’s article is the longest in the volume (65 pages), and contains thirty plates and eleven figures.

Halpin’s excellent second article in the volume, “Seeing in Stone: Tsimshian Masking and the Twin Stone Masks” (reprinted from Abbott (1981)) further extends the discussion of *naxnox* (see the articles by Guedon), and its relationship to names and masks. Halpin indicates that with the wearing of a *naxnox* mask, the norms of Tsimshian culture can be transgressed. In Halpin’s (p. 298) words:

Naxnox masks are instruments of transformation which turned their wearers inside-out to reveal those attributes of person and action normally

denied, especially to those of high status . . . *naxnox* transform chiefs, members of their families, and other high-ranking people, into rule-breakers, foreigners, animals, and the dead — all of which are *outside* the boundaries of Tsimshian culture.

In her Afterword, Carol Farber describes the activities associated with the conference, which she calls an “event,” and the process which led to the collection (or “artifact,” as she describes it). To Farber, the Tsimshian world has two parts: a “given world” to the native Tsimshian, and a world “to be discovered, to be translated” for the non-Tsimshian researcher. The results of those translation attempts in 1979 are reflected in the articles. Much of Farber’s paper is also best seen as paying homage to what she calls the “Tsimshian genius” (p. 315).

Comments on Contents

One of the strong aspects of this collection is the extensive use of material from the Barbeau and Beynon files. At some point it would be useful to have some of the actual texts published.

While several articles stand by themselves, a number of groupings somewhat different from those of the editor can be made. The complicated and important concept of power, captured in part by the term *naxnox*, is described in the two articles by Guedon and Shane, and by Halpin’s “Seeing in Stone.” Lineage structure and ceremonies — it is often difficult to separate the two — are dealt with in Halpin “Feast Names,” Miller and Seguin. Allaire and Dunn are linked by their common concern with what they call “mental maps,” although their approaches are different. All of the above articles require careful and attentive reading.

Given that several articles deal with the same topic (e.g., power), there is a great deal of repetition. An alternative approach might have been to use one article, with substantial commentary. This would have allowed the reader to get a sense of the interaction during the conference. It appears that this important element of the “event” (to use Farber’s word) is simply not available to the reader, yet seems to be a major reason for publishing the collection. We also have no idea how the Hartley Bay people responded to the attempts to get into their world. J. McDonald’s argument that early ethnographers missed the political and economic context of nineteenth-century Tsimshian life is also not picked up on in the other papers, and I am left wondering to what extent the Barbeau and Beynon material can be used for this purpose, in addition to expanding our knowledge of ceremonies and social organization.

I conclude this section with some specific comments. I am puzzled why Seguin (p. x) writes that “among the Nishga there were generally only three crest groups represented.” I encountered four. Seguin (p. xv) and Campbell (p. 23) both use incorrect figures for the number of judges sitting on the Calder case. There were seven, not nine.

Buzzwords abound in this volume, especially in the Introduction and Afterword. One much overworked term is “contextualize” (e.g., pp. ix, xvix). At one point, Farber (p. 315) refers to the papers in the collection as “tightly interferring” — whatever that means.

Given the variations in spellings of the same concepts and terms in different articles, the reader is advised to check the “Note on Variant Spellings of Native Language Terms” (p. 335).

Beyond the Articles

After reading the collection, I was left wishing for a number of articles which might have provided a broader context for the often focused papers. Given the importance of the works of Barbeau and Beynon, I wanted a chapter on the history of anthropological research among the Tsimshian, and Tsimshian accounts of that research. During my work with the Nishga, I was often given a story about anthropologists. Boas, Barbeau and others were described as people who had come and collected, but had never really understood. The legacy of anthropology is very much a part of Nishga oral traditions, and anthropologists must be cognizant of this. We should remember that Edward Sapir’s Nishga articles (Sapir, 1915, 1920) are based on information obtained when a Nishga delegation was in Ottawa to discuss land claims.

An article on the relationship between Tsimshian studies and anthropological theory also was missed. I’m not quite sure, after reading the articles, if some anthropologists haven’t merged into Tsimshian society. I get the feeling that the Tsimshian have captured anthropology, rather than anthropology capturing, through its models, the essence of Tsimshian society. Perhaps because of the substantive nature of the papers, Mauss, Van Gennep, Lévi-Strauss (in his kinship version), and others did not make appearances. However controversial, books like Rosman and Rubel’s (1971) create a necessary theoretical distance. I have found that the geographically removed but structurally close Trobriand Islanders provide a means of thinking about Tsimshian society (especially Hutchins (1980) and Weiner (1976)). More specifically, Seguin’s excellent article “Lest There Be No Salmon” begs comparison with Goldman

(1975) and Walens (1981) — recognizing that the latter book appeared after the conference. In this collection, though, theory perhaps waits until the excavation of the Barbeau and Beynon material is complete.

Five other topics are conspicuous by their absence: (1) a discussion of conflict resolution, especially with respect to competing claims to land; (2) a history of the emergence of Native political organizations, especially the role of Tsimshians in fishing and land claims organizations; (3) a section with comments by the Tsimshian themselves; (4) an overview of the archaeological record in the Tsimshian area; and (5) no detailed information is presented on the material basis of Tsimshian social formations, and the importance of contemporary harvesting of marine and terrestrial resources. Given the hope of the editor that the volume will aid the Tsimshian in land claims, this is an important omission. Daniel Raunet's (1984) excellent account of the history of Nishga land claims shows the amount of data available for this topic.

The Tsimshian as a Unit of Study

It is clear from the articles that a number of comparisons can be made between the groups which make up what we call "Tsimshian." Perhaps it is time to break out of the box of northwest coast ethnology, empty it, and start anew. Simply mentioning that the Nishga, for example, are different, is not enough. We need to delve into the differences to see if they are variants of an underlying order, or completely different structures and social formations, perhaps based on a lineage mode of production. The Nishga and Gitksan are underrepresented in the collection, but studies among them have raised some interesting questions. For example, Adams (1973:27) identifies a Gitksan social unit known as *wilnad'ahl*, and the same term appears among the Nishga. It would be interesting to see where else this level of organization appears. Our very terms used for describing social organization need clarification; moiety, phratry, crest group, clan, lineage, local lineage segment, house, etc., are used in a variety of ways. The excellent articles by Halpin, Guedon and Seguin indicate the extent to which Tsimshian terms can be analyzed. How we use those terms in anthropology is important, as Duff (1973) cautioned a decade ago.

The research being carried out under the direction of various tribal councils for land claims may very well generate the comprehensive ethnographies we need for the Tsimshian area. The need for understanding how land rights operate in lineage-based societies may also force us

to compare the northwest coast with similar societies in other parts of the world. Then, I would argue, the Tsimshian (or perhaps more appropriately the Nishga, Gitksan, Coast Tsimshian and Southern Tsimshian) will have revealed their true genius.

Conclusion

The Tsimshian will appeal to students of Tsimshian ethnography, especially those with an interest in social organization, ceremonies and shamanism. The emphasis on these topics, and the focus on the Southern Tsimshian, means that this book can be seen as an addition to the growing literature on the area but cannot be taken as a statement about general Tsimshian society and economy. Given the regional differences, such a volume is perhaps not possible. However, the articles in this work will provide important points of departure for future studies of the larger Tsimshian language group. Because the articles engage the readers at a fairly dense level, this book is not for those first entering the Tsimshian world. But those of us who have been there will likely want to have a copy.

Like all University of British Columbia publications I have seen, this book is well manufactured, with crisp type and clear photos. Perhaps, though, a paperback edition in the future might make owning a copy easier. Given the range of topics presented in the articles, many readers may not want to buy the hardcover version for the two or three articles they want — or which are required for a course.

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DOUGLAS R. HUDSON

Early Maritime Artists of the Pacific Northwest Coast, 1741-1841, by John Frazier Henry. Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1984. Pp. xvi, 240; 16 colour plates. \$40.00. Cloth.

Although specialists in northwest coast history may have access to a portion of the printed drawings and illustrations of some early expeditions, this is the first major compilation that brings together the product of many voyages of Russia, Britain, France, Spain and the United States. The overall impact of Henry's study is considerable — both in terms of the plates reproduced from a diversity of artists and for the detailed biographies of the individuals who sketched their impressions of the North Pacific littoral and its inhabitants. While only a few of the artists

possessed great talent in drawing or painting, their contributions become quite evident when their works are assembled in one volume rather than scattered in printed works, archives and private collections. Unfortunately, many of the expeditions did not have the services of an individual sufficiently talented to draw pictures or with leisure time enough away from the heavy demands of exploration, commerce or navigation. Some of the Russian sources remain unavailable to Western researchers, and other valuable materials either have been lost or remain hidden and unrecognized in family collections.

Official scientific expeditions of all the participant nations produced by far the richest sources of drawings, sketches and watercolour paintings. Russian artists worked under specific instructions to stress accuracy and to avoid the embellishments and exaggerations of memory. John Webber, who accompanied James Cook, was a gifted landscape painter, and there were others in the expedition who possessed artistic talents. The French sent Gaspard Duché de Vancy with the La Pérouse expedition with orders to draw coastal profiles so important in early navigation and to record "all unusual happenings." While the first Spanish expeditions dispatched from Mexico lacked the trappings of the scientific expeditions including artists, this was overcome by the rich production of Tomás de Suría, José Cardero and others who accompanied Alejandro Malaspina. The American fur traders produced some good graphic materials from their commercial voyages, but it was not until the official expedition led by Lieutenant Charles Wilkes (1836-1842) that they made significant artistic and ethnological contributions employing the camera lucida on some occasions to improve accuracy.

Anthropologists and historians have criticized the early artists for depictions of northwest coast Indians and scenery which sometimes appears to be more European than American. Problems developed between the sketches made on the northwest coast and the final printed illustrations or when artists and lithographers in Europe, Mexico and the United States "improved" the rough draft originals. Artists of the Academia de San Carlos in Mexico City made the northwest coast people look like Aztecs who inhabited a country where the vegetation was more Mexican or Californian than northern marine. In many instances, later pictures were unnatural composites of early sketches designed to interest the European viewer rather than to be accurate in ethnological aspects. In England, for example, engraver Joseph Woodcock added palm trees to a Tlingit site and had the natives of Cook Inlet paddling planked boats rather than kayaks. Even greater liberties were taken by French lithog-

raphers who added a Greek athlete holding a discus as well as a trade axe to a Tlingit scene drawn by Duché de Vancy! Despite these distortions, the author is close to the truth when he notes that sketches of native faces were "reasonably correct."

To meet market needs for book sales and to satisfy European ideas about barbarism and civilization, the engravers tampered with original drawings. The unknown North Pacific coastline populated by strange peoples was the perfect scene for published voyages. The illustrators added dramatic elements, mystery and romanticism. Taking original Spanish sketches by José Cardero, Fernando Brambila added skulls, wind-damaged trees tossed about without order, and other touches that would capture the imagination of readers and enhance the mood of primeval barbarism of the northwest coast. By the time of the later Russian expeditions or of the American Wilkes expedition, however, artists such as Louis Choris, Mikhail Tikhanov, Pavel Mikhailov, Alfred Agate, James Dana, Joseph Drayton and Henry Eld produced drawings that even after engraving portrayed real life and stressed accuracy.

Considering the length of the period under consideration and the diversity of the expeditions, Henry has done an excellent job of presenting his subject. Certain themes emerge as common factors in the drawings and sketches of each nation. The magnificent and almost overpowering scenery of the Pacific coastline challenged all artists equally. The indigenous peoples appear in familiar settings in canoes and kayaks offering to engage in commerce and in their houses, which intrigued all of the Europeans. A French drawing of 1786 by Blondela of a large Tlingit canoe with paddlers is similar in every detail to a Spanish sketch by Ignacio Arteaga of 1779 from Bucareli Sound. Even though there are no other known drawings from the Arteaga expedition, the commander was so taken by the Tlingit canoes that he made a valiant effort to portray one in a drawing attached to his written description.

For some expeditions, the author enjoyed a real wealth of materials from which to select samples. One might quibble about some choices, but most are excellent. The maritime fur traders left behind much less artistic material, but their role is not neglected. Unfortunately, some of the sketches and drawings reproduced in the volume are not quite as clear as they might have been. This criticism might be directed to the printer, but the author could have enhanced some of the reproductions by having new photographs made from the originals rather than using existing copies. In the case of the Spanish 1792 drawings from Madrid, Parks Canada in Ottawa has a complete set of slightly different originals that

reproduce much better than the Spanish versions. The 1837 engraving of Chief Maquinna was much better reproduced in another recent publication. Despite these minor complaints, the volume is a most welcome addition to the northwest coast bibliography. It will find an important place in the collection of anyone who is interested in the early history of the coastline from the Oregon-California boundary to Point Barrow, Alaska.

University of Calgary

CHRISTON I. ARCHER

Above Tide: Reflections on Roderick Haig-Brown, by Anthony Robertson. Madeira Park: Harbour Publishing, 1984. 136 pp.

This is a modest book. It is neither a biography nor a real critical study of Roderick Haig-Brown; its author describes it as a book of "Reflections," and this unassuming description is correct. It is a brief and tentative look at Haig-Brown's life and works.

Haig-Brown has been dead too short a time for memories of him to have settled enough for a full and frank biography to be feasible. At the same time he is a writer in whose work a transparent simplicity and a fine artistry are so mingled that criticism is difficult unless it recognizes how far Haig-Brown's writing was dependent on and derived from his experience. Like George Orwell, Haig-Brown was one of the writers whose work demonstrates that the doctrine of the "biographical fallacy" is not universally applicable.

Whenever Haig-Brown moved out of experience into the invented space of fiction, he wrote clumsily and unconvincingly. When he wrote of experience, using the kind of personal essay whose form he polished and perfected, he was a convincing and moving writer whose evocation of remembered scenes was superb and whose imagery vibrated with life and colour. To consider his work outside the experience he rendered so powerfully, through a combination of recollection and artifice, is to lose not only its intent but also half its meaning. So, in the end, any criticism of Haig-Brown has to take into account the life of a writer whose social conscience made him a rural magistrate and whose emotional needs made him a complete and perpetual countryman.

Tentative approaches, like that of Mr. Robertson, who gives us the barest of external facts and never tries to probe deeply into the mind of Haig-Brown, a reticent man and very guarded about his private feelings, only reveal how difficult it is, without the biographical data, to go

beyond and urbane appreciation of this deceptively open writer. Haig-Brown was never the kind of artificer of the imagination who creates a world of his own into which we can enter without the personality and the life of its creator intruding. He wrote, when he wrote best, about the world of his own living, and the more we know about that world he asked us to share with him, the better we understand his work. But even with abundant data from the writer's life, a deeper kind of analysis than Mr. Robertson practices in his comments on Haig-Brown's books would be necessary to do them real justice. Some of his insights are shrewd, and his writing is always serious and at times clearly influenced by Haig-Brown's example of graceful clarity, but he moves too swiftly and too shallowly for anyone familiar with Haig-Brown's books to feel he has learned much that he did not know already. The real book on Haig-Brown, the conservationist and amateur naturalist as well as the writer, remains to be done.

Vancouver

GEORGE WOODCOCK

One Union in Wood, by Jerry Lembke and William M. Tattam. Harbour Publishing and International Publishers, 1984.

One Union in Wood is, surprisingly, the first book-length study of the International Woodworkers of America. There have been earlier books, but these have been anecdotal accounts by people very close to the scene of action, most notably Vernon Jensen's *Lumber and Labor* and Myrtle Bergren's *Tough Timber*.

Other studies of labour organization have included the IWA only as a part of a larger picture of national or international trade unionism. Lembke and Tattam have attempted to provide a survey of all of the major events in the history of woodworkers' unions from their earliest beginnings in the nineteenth century in the Pacific Northwest to the Newfoundland strike of 1959. They have subtitled their work "A Political History of the International Woodworkers of America," by which they mean to let the reader know that this book will describe the events which produced a communist-dominated union and subsequent events

Because the IWA is not yet fifty years old, it has been possible to rely which resulted in the removal of the communists from leadership. on oral accounts as well as newly available documentary sources. Sometimes this produces curious shifts in focus, from a crisp account of the

proceedings of an IWA convention to the orally derived record of workers marching fifty miles through the bush from Parksville to Great Central Lake, assisted by townspeople. I do not suggest that something like that did not happen, but anyone who knows the terrain must regard it as unlikely; there was a rail line for the greater part of the fifty miles.

For B.C. readers, the 1948 breakaway of the B.C. section from the international organization forms the strongest part of the book. The authors go on to show that this was the first bang in a series of explosions that swept on through the American side of the union, echoing on a minute scale the politics of the cold war, and ending in a restructuring of the IWA in a way that removed power from the local unions and vested it in regional organizations whose boundaries were carefully drawn in order to neutralize the power of such pockets of communist support as remained by the mid-fifties.

Undoubtedly the energy and colour of these parts of the book arise from the fact that the authors had the good fortune to be able to interview both Karly Larson and Harold Prichett, both of whom were dedicated organizers for the woodworkers' union and as well for the communist party, exhibiting a determination and enthusiasm not to be seen in today's business unions. For them, the class war continued. Presented with representative members of a new, post cold war generation, they seized the opportunity to show Lembke and Tattam the world through the eyes of the IWA Red Bloc of the 1940s.

Indeed, all history is biased, and any that attempts true objectivity fails. I do not quibble with Lembke and Tattam having adopted a particular viewpoint. What I do find a problem is the pervasive tendency to present the communist leadership or the Red Bloc as victims, buffeted by events over which they had no control, and finally subverted by the anti-democratic forces of the state. See, for example, page 132: "When imprisonment failed to change Dalskog's mind, the court attacked the entire WIUC leadership." B.C. courts may often appear unjust and unfair to underdogs, but they cannot "attack" a union leadership. This kind of phraseology turns up all too frequently in this book and weakens it as a critical study.

A more profound weakness arises from the authors' failure to tie the book to the development of communism in Canada and the U.S. It was not accidental or merely incidental that the early organizers were communist party members. Certainly it is fair to state that they were good organizers because they understood the nature of class conflict in a capitalist society. But it must also be stated that they were directed by

the Communist International and later, after the Comintern was disbanded, by Moscow. This can no longer be dismissed as the kind of distortion promulgated by red-baiters. The documentary evidence exists. See Ian Angus, *Canadian Bolsheviks*. In fact there is good reason to refer to this evidence, because it clarifies what is at some points a confusing tale of labour and political intrigue, which, though well researched, does not take us as far as it could toward understanding the trade unionism of the thirties and forties.

It is clear that the Workers Unity League and the Lumber Workers' International Union were established in the early thirties as a result of a Comintern directive to organize unions outside the American Federation of Labor. Since the AFL was not actually organizing the woodworkers, the policy made sense. In the late thirties and early forties the communist directive was to co-operate with all anti-fascist forces. To that end the IWA attempted to affiliate itself with the B.C. CCF (a socialist party). The CCF rejected the IWA because it could not, or would not, guarantee that delegates to the CCF convention would not be members of other political parties (i.e., were not communists).

By 1945 the communist directive was to attack socialists. In B.C. this meant running communist candidates in the elections of that year. The executive officers of the communist party in B.C. were also the executive officers of the IWA. Some of these were also candidates in the elections. When a member of Local 1-357 raised a query about \$9,372.85 which was "not accounted for" (p. 121), there was a more serious underlying question: had the IWA executive assisted the communist party executive with about \$9,000 in union funds towards election expenses?

Unfortunately, by having relied solely on Red Bloc interviewees in B.C. the authors have missed this essential point. Though they go on to provide a mass of information about audits and vouchers, charges and denials, the one basic question has not been addressed. Which came first for the communist leadership of the union: the Party or the IWA?

Despite these weaknesses, this is an important book, and it will become a reference point for future work on the IWA and others of the once communist-dominated unions. In B.C. at least, the field has hardly been touched, and it is to be hoped that Lembke and Tattam will inspire others to pursue this work while some of the main participants are still with us.