

*American Indians in the Marketplace:  
Persistence and Innovation among the Menominees  
and Metlakatlangs, 1870-1920*

Brian C. Hosmer

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**A**MERICAN INDIANS in the *Marketplace* compares two interesting case studies of how Aboriginal communities engaged with the emerging market economies of their regions during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These case studies involve, respectively, the Menominees (Wisconsin) and the Metlakatla Tsimshian (Alaska). Brian Hosmer presents detailed analyses of how these two communities sought to participate in economic development through the marketplace and to temper the effects of the market economy on their cultural values. He argues that they were not simply active participants in the emerging market economies of their regions but that, along with other Aboriginal communities,

they understood that market capitalism encouraged and rewarded individualistic, entrepreneurial values, along with modes of behavior that tended to separate persons from their community. Perceiving these influences as corrosive to fundamental values that preserved, sometimes even renewed, community and identity, some Indians, Menominees and Tsimshians in this study, explored means to conform economic change to their needs. (xi)

Hosmer's approach is grounded in world systems theory as developed in Immanuel Wallerstein's *The Modern World System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of European World Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (1974) and adapted to American Indian history by Richard White in *Roots of Dependency* (1983). Through a detailed analysis of changes that took place over fifty years in these two communities, Hosmer demonstrates the usefulness of this approach to understanding the active agency of Aboriginal communities in the interplay of economic and cultural change and the persistence of cultural values.

Hosmer takes communities as his unit of focus, examining the ways in which market enterprises were developed and shaped to community purposes. Readers will find some similarities to the approach taken in Sarah Carter's study of Aboriginal ranching in the Prairies (*Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy* [1990]). Furthermore, Hosmer's focus on communities rather than on individuals complements the approach taken by Rolf Knight in *Indians at Work* (1978). Knight's arguments about the significance of Aboriginal labour in building the economy of British Columbia focused on the contributions of Aboriginal people as

workers but did not explore the role of Aboriginal communities in shaping economic participation to meet their own ends.

Readers of *BC Studies* will be most interested in the detailed discussion of the economic history of Metlakatla, which includes a twenty-page chapter on the Tsimshians of British Columbia (including Gitksan and Nisga'a communities). Hosmer has cited many of the available published and archival sources and presented a competent synthesis, although specialists will have some quibbles with it. For instance, Hosmer states that Blackfish and Raven were the original and pri-

mary clans among the Gitk'a'ta (116). In fact they were Blackfish and Eagle, as stated in what appears to be his primary source on Tsimshian culture, Jay Miller's *Tsimshian Culture: A Light through the Ages* (1999, 56). There are also some orthographic errors with regard to the use of Tsimshian terms ("walp" or "waab," not "waalb"; "Gitga'ata" or "Gitk'a'ata," not "Gitk'a'ta" [116]). Though readers should treat Hosmer's discussion of Tsimshian ethnology with some caution, even specialists will find that the history of the economic enterprises that he has studied provides some new material and an interesting synthesis.

*Haa Aaní, Our Land:  
Tlingit and Haida Land Rights and Use*

Walter R. Goldschmidt and Theodore H. Haas  
Thomas F. Thornton, editor

Seattle: University of Washington Press and Juneau: Sealaska Heritage  
Foundation, 1999. 219 pp. Illus., maps. US\$30 paper.

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THESE ARE A SIGNIFICANT body of anthropological work languishing in the no man's land of the unpublished report. Available to the general public briefly, if at all, these reports disappear quickly and quietly into the depths of waiting archives. Sometimes they may have a life beyond the initial aims and objectives of the agency that commissioned the report. "Possessory Rights of the Natives of Southeastern Alaska," originally commissioned by the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1946 and written by Walter Goldschmidt

and Theodore Haas, is one such report. Its purpose was to determine Tlingit and Haida land rights in southeast Alaska in anticipation of the nationwide hearings of the Indian Land Claims Commission and the impending statehood of Alaska (xxiii). However, it long outlived its initial purpose. As editor Thomas Thornton explains, the report came to be regarded by the Tlingit and Haida as a "remarkably useful study [that] was almost always the starting point for further research [into questions of] customary and traditional uses" (xiii). That the report