

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THESE ARE A SIGNIFICANT body of anthropological work languishing in the no man's land of the unpublished report.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

has been co-published by Sealaska Heritage Foundation with the University of Washington Press speaks to the regard with which it is held by contemporary Tlingit and Haida communities as a useful anthropological work.

*Haa Aani* is an important document that has significance for First Nations in British Columbia and all those with an interest in Tlingit and Haida relations to their land and resources. This is so in two particular ways. First, the original document itself is an exemplary example of how to research and write a report concerning Aboriginal land rights and use along the Northwest Coast. Second, and perhaps even more important, the report is an example of how anthropology as a discipline and a methodology can be employed by and on behalf of First Peoples. I will expand this point below, but first allow me a few words on the actual contents of *Haa Aani*.

The republished report contains an introduction by Thornton, a reflective essay by Goldschmidt (one of the original researchers), and the complete transcripts of the original testimony of the elders and community leaders interviewed in 1946. Thornton's introduction effectively situates the significance of the report for the Tlingit and Haida. He provides an important historical context to the report that carefully and concisely describes the legal framework within which the Alaskan Native Claims movement evolved. Goldschmidt's personal reminiscence of the research experience and his "relationships with and feelings about the community of Alaskan Indians, mostly Tlingit, who accepted and trusted [the research team] with their knowledge" (xxiii) is of particular interest to anthropologists, especially applied anthropologists. Working

with the lawyer Theodore Haas and Tlingit researcher Joseph Kahklen, they embarked on a whirlwind tour of Tlingit and Haida villages in southeast Alaska. The entire report, from research to final draft, was completed within three months. "It is a source of surprise to me," Goldschmidt comments, "that we managed as well as we did, and of great pride that the Report is seen fifty years later as of such value that its republication is sponsored by the Tlingit people themselves" (xxv).

As an academic positioned between life as a social anthropologist and family ties to the very people being chronicled, I found the transcripts of the elders' and community knowledge holders' interviews especially powerful. In particular, the words of the elders from Tongass Island, a small island just across the BC/Alaska border, took me back to memories of my childhood. I was born and raised in Prince Rupert, barely a half day's boat trip south of Tongass Island, and I grew up listening to stories about my family's history and how my great-grandmother and her family left the village on Tongass Island in the late 1800s during the US Army occupation of the island. I hear the echoes of my own family's history in the words of the elders. Their words lend meaning and context to the stories I grew up with in ways the report, with its narrow focus on resource use and proprietary rights, never can.

As in many cases in British Columbia's recent history, the research agenda behind the original Goldschmidt and Haas report was driven by outside legal requirements, not direct community needs. In 1940s Alaska, the drive towards statehood and the encroachment of non-Aboriginal settlers were adversely affecting Tlingit and Haida use of their traditional territories. In British

Columbia similar issues are driving the contemporary indigenous research agenda, in which First Nations are required to demonstrate that they exist as an indigenous people and then document the extent of their land base as it existed prior to European contact. The result is that key concerns relating to meeting real needs pertaining to local well-being are often pushed aside as bands and tribal offices are forced to defend their land and territory in Canadian courts.

The question of who drives the research agenda also raises an important and uneasy question about the role of anthropologists in First Nations communities. It is not unusual to hear First Nations people talk about anthropology as a process of cultural theft and anthropologists as the thieves who steal in under the cover of friendliness only to depart, never returning, with stories and knowledge they then exploit to the detriment of the community. *Haa Aani*, however, is an important example of what anthropologists more often contribute to First Nations communities: reports, articles, books, and manuscripts that are useful, informative, and carefully thought out. In British Columbia for example, nearly every major court case concerning Aboriginal rights and title that has been heard has involved one or more anthropologists hired by a First Nation to prepare an “expert” witness report.

Anthropologists are among the first to argue that the misplaced standards of the Euro-American legal system inappropriately require an “expert” to say what should rightfully be said – if it should be said at all – by elders and other community-based knowledge holders. Yet this has been the colonial paradox. In order for First Nations to assert their claims before the courts, it has been necessary to hire outside

experts such as anthropologists and historians to validate and translate for the court what community members already know.

Despite the important role anthropologists have played in support of Aboriginal rights and claims, they are rarely part of the power structure that shapes the everyday lives of First Nations peoples. They are, however, people who return, year in and year out (as funding and personal commitments to family and work allow), to the communities with whom they have worked. It is long past time to recognize that the source of colonialism and the exploitation of First Peoples is neither anthropology nor anthropologists. Yes, the discipline emerged out of the expansion of capitalism and the European-based colonialism of the late 1800s. Yes, there are individuals who are insensitive and self-serving. However, to continue to target anthropologists, as some commentators do, merely shifts the spotlight of critical examination away from the real offenders. The real thieves arrive with briefcases and contracts, they promise economic benefits, jobs, and community centres in exchange for timber, fish, minerals, water rights, or places to dump toxic waste and garbage. These people are rarely interested in the lives of First Nations, except in so far as this knowledge may improve corporate profit margins.

Anthropology is not simply part of a Western metanarrative responsible for destroying indigenous societies. In fact, anthropology is a by-product of the interaction between Europeans and First Nations, and it is at least as useful to First Nations as computers, back-hoes, or modern fishing boats. Anthropology is one more tool that, in particular circumstances, can be put to good use by and on behalf of First

Nations. The publication of *Haa Aani* should remind us that anthropologists can be important allies in the struggle for self-determination and decolonialization.

First Peoples in the Americas have repeatedly been forced to assert ownership of the land, to stand up and say: *Haa Aani*, this is our land. Even when the newcomers do not listen, elders

and community leaders continue to stand up and repeat: this is our land, we were born here, and our grandparents and their grandparents before us were born here, back to before the time Raven brought light to the people. *Haa Aani* is a document that should be read and pondered by all those concerned for the rights of First Peoples.

*Those Who Fell from the Sky:  
A History of the Cowichan People*

Daniel P. Marshall

Duncan: Cultural and Educational Centre, Cowichan Tribes,  
1999. 194 pp. Illus., map. \$29.95 paper.

By Terry Glavin

*Editor, Transmontaine Books*

**T**HIS IS NOT a work of independent scholarship. It was undertaken by a graduate student in history, but it is a commissioned work that was vetted by a group of Cowichan elders, a "history book committee," and senior tribal officials. It is the Cowichans' authorized, approved, and "official" version of history. It does not pretend to be otherwise, and it is a useful and valuable work, in spite of these things and because of them.

Originally intended as a book for Cowichan youth, *Those Who Fell from the Sky* evolved into a book specifically intended to educate the general public about the Cowichan peoples, their history, and the ways the Cowichans have met the challenge arising from long-standing trespasses upon Aboriginal title in British Columbia. The Cowichan tribes' contemporary re-

sponse to that challenge is their participation in the British Columbia Treaty Process as well as in public education efforts, of which this book is a part.

*Those Who Fell from the Sky* presents a version of the Cowichans' oral traditions that follows a single narrative line of the sort that tends to lose the nuances and the vitality of the original stories. Still, the contribution made by "official" histories such as these, as long as they are understood to be mainly descriptions of stories rather than the stories themselves, should not be underestimated. *Those Who Fell from the Sky* allows the Cowichan peoples to present the history of their "land claims" on their own terms. This should be of broad interest, if only because it was the failure of the Crown and the Cowichan peoples to conclude a treaty in the 1860s that marked the