

## Book Reviews

*The West Coast (Nootka) People*, by E. Y. Arima. Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, Special Publication No. 6, 1983. Pp. 205; illus. \$7.00.

Typical of B.C. Provincial Museum publications, *The West Coast (Nootka) People* is an attractive, well-produced volume. Numerous well-chosen photographs complement the text. These include not only such familiar images as John Webber's 1778 sketches of Yuquot and Edward Curtis' famous (although posed) portraits of West Coast people, but also many that have rarely been published. Also very effective are the graphic designs by contemporary West Coast (Hesquiat) artist Tim Paul, which illustrate some of the stories and myths. In these days of ever-increasing book costs, the Provincial Museum should also be commended for the modest price of this publication.

The subjects of this book are the native people commonly referred to as the Nootka, who occupied Vancouver Island's rugged outer coast and the adjacent tip of the Olympic Peninsula. As Arima points out, the term "Nootka" is an historical error, mistakenly applied by Captain James Cook to the sound which he visited in 1778 and its native inhabitants. No term in the native language extended to all the separate independent groups, each with its own specific name and territory. Recently the term "West Coast" has been adopted as a collective name by the native people formerly termed "Nootka," and this usage has been respected in many anthropological publications. Even more recently, the term "Nuu-chah-nulth" (freely translated as "all along the mountains") has been proposed as a collective name and has been adopted by the Tribal Council. How widely accepted this latest name will become remains to be seen. These attempts to establish a collective identity do not extend to the American Nootkans of the Olympic Peninsula, who continue to be referred to as the Makah.

Arima provides a good overview of the published literature and also includes considerable data from unpublished field notes. The latter include the important early writings of Edward Sapir, recent fieldwork by Denis St. Claire among the Tseshah of Port Alberni and his own work among the Pacheenaht of Port Renfrew. His primary informants were Pacheenaht Chief Charles Jones and his wife Ida. Jones, who was born in 1876, is a well-known West Coast figure and subject of another recent book (*Queesto: Pacheenaht Chief by Birthright*, Theytus Books, 1981). The result is a fairly balanced treatment of all West Coast groups, compared to the strong bias in favour of the more northerly groups in the standard ethnographic source for the West Coast people (Philip Drucker's *The Northern and Central Nootkan Tribes*, Smithsonian Institution, 1951). As Drucker's book has never been reprinted and is not widely available, Arima's contribution is all the more welcome.

Throughout the book, native terms are used extensively, so that we can read how the West Coasters themselves referred to their political divisions, geographic locations and the animals and plants which surrounded them. The orthography used to render these native terms is described in an appendix and gives the reader a good guide to pronunciation. It seems somewhat unfortunate, however, that several differing orthographic systems are being used for recent publications on the West Coast people (for example, see David Ellis and Luke Swan's *Teachings of the Tides*, Theytus Books, 1981, for an alternate system prepared by the British Columbia Indian Language Project). As several distinct dialects were spoken on the West Coast, Arima is careful to indicate where terms differ and occasionally gives several regional variants of the same term. It seems unnecessary, however, in a book primarily addressed at a popular audience, to use the transcriptions for group names throughout (for example, tla<sup>?</sup>ökwi<sup>?</sup>at<sup>?</sup> for the Clayoquot, or ditidät<sup>x</sup> for the Nitinat). After they have been given once, it would be less confusing to use the common terms.

The book is organized into five chapters. Four deal with traditional ethnographic topics such as making a living, organization into social groups and the spirit world around them. One takes an historical perspective, chronicling changes in West Coast life from prehistory to the modern age. While the latter would seem to be a logical concluding point for the book, the author refuses to end on what he considers to be a less than positive note and returns the reader to a discussion of the traditional society for the final chapter.

The historical chapter, titled "The Long Past of the West Coast People," is uneven in its coverage. While some sections (particularly those on warfare and recent history) are well described and informative, the initial section ("History Before Written Records") is very weak. It consists only of a brief summary of the archaeological sequence from Yuquot, in Nootka Sound, which is presented as if it applies to the whole West Coast. Such an assumption is unwarranted. Also, it is taken from John Dewhirst's short 1978 article, rather than from his much more complete final report (*The Yuquot Project, Volume 1: The Indigenous Archaeology of Yuquot, A Nootkan Outside Village*, Parks Canada, 1980). No mention is made of the archaeological work at Hesquiat or in the Port Alberni-Barkley Sound area, despite the fact that sources on these projects (Haggarty and Boehm 1974, Haggarty and Crozier 1975, McMillan and St. Claire 1976a) are listed in the "References Cited" section. Nor does he discuss the long-term project at Ozette, on the Olympic Peninsula, despite the well-known and spectacular nature of the finds at that site, and despite listing a popular account of the work there (Kirk with Daugherty 1974) in the "Additional Reading" section. Altogether, this extremely brief section fails to convey any sense of West Coast life prior to the disruption by European explorers and fur traders beginning in the 1770s.

Arima provides numerous insights into West Coast life in the early contact period, as gleaned from the writings of early explorers and traders. Effective use is made of quotations from such early observers of West Coast life as Cook, Meares and Jewitt. It is unfortunate that the recently published journal of Alexander Walker (*An Account of a Voyage to the North West Coast of America in 1785 & 1786*, Douglas & McIntyre, 1982) seems to have been unavailable to him, as this also has numerous interesting observations on West Coast people in the early contact period. Arima, however, seems to accept uncritically these early writings, with little assessment of their reliability. For example, he accepts without question Meares' claim that the West Coasters were cannibals (p. 123). While the West Coast practice of offering such items as human hands for sale led many of the early traders to this conclusion, it is still uncertain whether these were intended for consumption or as trophies. It is interesting to note that Walker, who was convinced while in Nootka Sound that the natives were cannibals, later reversed his opinion. As Robin Fisher and J. M. Bumsted point out in their introduction to the Walker account, the charges of cannibalism against the West Coasters are still far from proven.

One also could wish that more careful editing had removed the errors and inconsistencies. It is somewhat disconcerting, for example, to read that British Columbia joined Confederation in 1868 rather than 1871 (p. 139), to see John Webber referred to as John Webster (p. 63), or to see Superintendent I. W. Powell's name misspelled (p. 142). On page 143, either something is missing from the sentence or Hesquiat has been incorrectly located on east Barkley Sound. Also, a 1929 photograph of a Clayoquot chief has been incorrectly attributed to Edward S. Curtis (p. 161). The most glaring inconsistency is the use of the term "West Coast" throughout the text; yet, whenever the term occurs in the captions, it is given as "Westcoast." References are made to such sources as Boas 1891 (throughout), Boas 1897 (p. 200), Boas 1916 (throughout) and Brabant 1930 (p. 89), yet none of these sources are listed under those dates in the bibliography. Also, despite the fact that the latter is termed "References Cited," it contains many listings which are not referred to in the text. Occasional grammatical errors and awkwardly phrased sentences also cry for a stronger editorial hand.

Despite the above criticisms, this is an attractive, easy-to-read book which should bring the fascinating culture of the West Coast people to wider public attention. It represents a good first step in a planned popular series on B.C. native cultures to be published by the Provincial Museum. A series of such reasonably priced volumes, striking a balance between popular appeal and scholarly overview, would be most welcome.

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*Haida Monumental Art: Villages of the Queen Charlotte Islands*, by George F. MacDonald. Foreword and graphics by Bill Reid. Commentary by Richard Huyda. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983. Pp. 240, 274 duotone and 18 colour photographs, 10 cartouches, 23 maps. Limited edition of 1,600. \$140.00. Cloth.

*Ninstints: Haida World Heritage Site*, by George F. MacDonald. Foreword by Michael Ames. Museum Note No. 12. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press in association with the UBC Museum of Anthropology, 1983. Pp. 59; 76 duotone and 18 colour photographs, 2 maps. \$8.95. Paper.

The core of *Haida Monumental Art* (168 out of 240 pages) is a catalogue resulting from MacDonald's archaeological work for the National