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THE LITERATURE ON THE HAIDA OF BRITISH COLUMBIA AND ALASKA: A CRITICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

There has been an almost immeasurable amount of information recorded about the Haida Indians of the Queen Charlotte Islands and the Prince of Wales Archipelago. For nearly two hundred years writers have been intrigued with the Haida and have yeilded their observations, reports and analyses to an eager audience. The authors range in nationality, profession, objective, and temperament--a range as diverse as it is vast. The purpose of this essay is not to historically cover all of the literature concerning the Haida, but to provide a critical bibliography of some of the more prominent material. Special attention will be paid to the ethnological record and the emergence of issues and themes in that portion of the literature. As a student of Haida art, I am perhaps predjudiced in my examination of this corpus in that I feel a central theme or issue in the ethnology is the attempt that many authors have made to deal with the art of the Haida people. Other issues are equally pertinent and therefore will be introduced and discussed. Due however, to the volume of material, these discussions must necessarily be brief.

I. HAIDA: The People and Their Land

Before delving into the bibliographic descriptions, some geographic and cultural orientation may prove helpful. The Haida live on the Queen Charlotte Islands and on the southwestern end of Prince of Wales Island in Alaska. Warmed by the Japanese current, these islands enjoy a temperate climate with heavy precipitation that produces a dense specialized vegetation consisting mainly of thick stands of conifers. The Queen Charlotte Islands appear as an inverted triangle about fifty miles off the nearest point of mainland northwestern British Columbia. The fingers of Prince of Wales Island stretch southwards to within sight of Graham Island, the northern-most and largest of the Charlottes. "Born during a period of violent volcanic upheaval eons ago, the main backbone of the Islands, about 155 miles long, is part of the same submerged mountain range which runs from the Olympic Mountains in Washington, U.S.A. and continues along Vancouver Island," (Dalzell, 1968:13) to Mt. St. Elias in Alaska. The mountains rise higher as the triangle of the Queen Charlottes narrows until Moresby--the southern and second largest island--becomes a sheer wall of green and rock plunging into the sea, indented by a few harbours and broken on the east into a number of smaller islands. For a detailed description of the geography of the Charlottes, Dawson (1880) provides an excellent source.

Culturally, the people inhabiting these Islands belong to the cultural area known as the Northwest Coast which stretches south from Yakutat Bay in Alaska along more than one thousand miles of rugged coastline to the Columbia River in the south. (note, Driver:1961 and Drucker:1955 maintain this cultural area reaches as far south as northern California, but the Columbia River is the generally accepted southern boundary.) These coastal peoples in earlier times were sturdy and populous seafarers. Their elaboration of canoe construction and navigation, their dependence on exploitation of marine resources, and their unique material culture produced a highly developed and sophisticated Indian culture unlike any other on the North American continent. "They were a people of high culture, with a passion

for making their social and religious worlds visible through plastic and graphic arts." (Duff, 1967:n.p.)

The Haida have been called "the most maritime and the most intensely artistic" peoples of the Northwest Coast (Ibid). Island folk, they travelled great distances over water to trade and visit, as well as to make war. Haida canoes and carved chests were much sought after items by other Northwest Coast peoples, and Haida artists travelled to various parts of the mainland to carve the totem poles which are unique to this cultural area. The Haida during the lively fur trade time initiated the carving of black slate--argillite-- for sale to the white man.

The Haida are divided into two matrilineal moieties that are exogamous units. These units--the Raven and the Eagle--are subdivided into various clans having specific lineages or houses. "This series of kin groups is cross-cut by residential units--towns--which are associated with a particular geographic territory."(Rosman, 1971:34) Murdock (1934) has succinctly expressed the division of the Haida, culturally and linguistically into four branches. The first or southern group which centered around Ninstints is now Extinct. (See Duff,1957, for an excellent ethnohistory of these Haida.) Skidegate is the present residence of the survivors of the second or central branch, while those of the third or northern group reside at Masset (known as Haida today). The fourth group is comprised of those whose ancestors migrated to Alaska some time just after the first white contact and are mainly concentrated today at Hydaburg. These Alaskan Haida, or Kaigani, speak a dialect that is similar to that spoken at Masset. The difference is quite marked between the Masset and Skidegate dialect, though there is a lesser difference between the Skidegate dialect and that spoken by the people in the southern parts of the Queen Charlotte Islands.

II. The Early Explorers and the Maritime Fur Trade.

As a researcher I find a certain excitement and fascination with the accounts of those first travellers to the land of the Haida. The historic literature of this period lacks the rich descriptions of Indian life that explorers recorded at Nootka--for in the north, fur traders far outnumbered the explorers. The traders came for the quick and substantial profit to be reaped from the bonanza of Haida furs. Fortunately, some of these expeditions included men who made careful and detailed observations--observations as rich as any bounty of furs.

Juan Pérez made the first(authenticated) visit to the Queen Charlotte Islands in 1774. The official records kept by Crespi and Pena (quoted in Gunther, 1972: Crespi, n.d.; Pena in Johnson,1911) provide excellent descriptions of the Kaigani Haida. La Pérouse made a brief visit in 1786 and records only the names he gave to the west coast of the Islands. Dixon was first to circumnavigate the Charlottes in 1787, naming the Islands for his queen and his ship. Dixon's own notes are scanty, but the official record kept by W.B. Beresford are the first records of the Haida on the major islands. They are often quoted and are rich in detail. (see Dixon:1789)

Dixon's news of the bountiful harvest of furs on the Queen Charlottes sent many maritime fur traders to the 'Land of good fortune.' Colnett and Duncan followed close on Dixon's heels. Colnett's personalized account describes hostile interaction between two Haida groups and comments on the mobility of the population. (Colnett, 1788:n.p.) By 1791 boats were flocking

to the Charlottes to obtain the supurb sea otter pelts taken by the Haida in Island waters. By 1825, more than 230 vessels had made trading visits to the coast. (Dalzell, 1968:25) It simply is not possible to recount here all of the traders who came to the Islands, but there are several whose observations are tangible contributions to this early period in Haida history.

Erna Gunther in her newest book, Indian Life on the Northwest Coast of North America (1972) has captured the excitment and vitality of those observations recorded during the period of maritime fur trade. Her chapter on the Haidas (1972: 118-138) recounts the famous meeting and exchange of names by Chief Blakow-Connehaw (predecessor of the Edenshaws) and Capt. Douglas of the Iphigenia in 1789. She describes the busy summer of 1791 when John Bartlett, Joseph Ingraham, and Etienne Marchand made three separate visits to Haida villages. Bartlett's famous sketch of a Dadens house with and elaborate frontal pole is the earliest known drawing of a Haida totem pole. (Bartlett, 1925:facing page 306). Ingraham (1790-92:107) and Marchand (in Fleurieu, 1801:269-270) give additional and invaluable observations of the same Haida house, as well as other aspects of Haida culture and life at that time.

These accounts, together with those of Hoskins (in Howay, 1941), Bishop (1794-96), and the writer of the journal of the Eliza (1799, quoted in Drucker, 1948) are indicative of the highly developed technology, social system and artistic styles of the Haida and provide testimonies to their intensive cultural development in prehistoric times. Wilson Duff's article (1964) refuting Barbeau's hypothesis that the Northwest Coast cultural achievements were due to post-contact influences contains many of the above mentioned accounts as proof of the antiquity of Haida art. this excellent article is highly recommended to the students of the Northwest Coast who have found Marius Barbeau's published works and interpretations frustrating and who seek a concise statement of the historical evidence concerning Haida art. (This article contains a fine bibliography, including a complete list of Barbeau's publications.)

Kathleen Dalzell's The Queen Charlotte Islands 1774-1966 (1968) contains an enjoyable, well-written ethno_history of the early contact period. This source would probably be even more indispensible had the author included a bibliography.

The Gunther, Duff and Dalzell books are intriguing starting places for the student of the Indian history of the Northwest Coast, but I hope that the reader will delve into the myriad of primary source materials and experience the thrill of discovery, the excitement of encounter, and the satisfaction of historical proof to be gleaned from the original record.

III. The Missionaries

The era of wealth that came with the fur trade was succeeded by waves of smallpox which raveged native populations on the Northwest Coast, leaving in its desolate wake poverty and a faltering confidence in the old ways. The influence of the older Haidas was not strong enough to keep the younger people from the lure of the city--and the smallpox and other diseases brought by the white man soon returned to the Charlottes with those who had gone to Victoria to seek their fortunes. (For a more complete statement of the steep decline in Indian populations that began with white contact, see Duff, 1964:38-46.)

The British Navy Commander, James Prevost, has been frequently credited with beginning the crusade which influenced the Church Missionary Society to come to the aid of the Northwest

Coast Indians. He brought William Duncan--the first missionary on the Northwest Coast--to Port Simpson in 1857. (Dalzell, 1968:83-84.) Nearly 16 years later, the Rev. W.H. Collison arrived at Metlakatla to assist Duncan. While he was in Port Simpson he began making friends among visiting Haida, and by 1876 he had established a mission at Masset. He remained among the Haida three years, learning their language and observing their culture while spreading the gospel. His observations and an account of his work were recorded in the 1916 publication: In The Wake Of The War Canoe. Despite the fact that he calls the Haida "piratical" headhunters and considers them to be a lower species of human, Collison's account is a valuable source because he records his observations with a sense of history--i.e. his Christian dogma and opinion is easily separated from his account of the events. Collison's successor, Rev. Charles Harrison wrote an equally valuable ethnohistory of the Haida: Ancient Warriors of The North Pacific. Harrison arrived in Masset in 1883 and set about evangelizing until a drinking problem forced his resignation in 1890. Harrison resided in Masset for 40 years as the "country squire cum entrepreneur"--a role which suited him admirably. (Dalzell, 1968:89-92). It was around this time that he began recording the Haida language (1895), spiritual culture (1892a), social organization and material culture (1892b). Harrison's accounts are liberally laced with Christian ethic, but the informed reader can find valuable material in his perceptive recording of Haida life during this period in their history. Much of his information was obtained from a Masset shaman, Ku-te whom he later baptized. Harrison was one of the few missionary writers who did not violently attack the Haida shaman or medicine-man, or present the shaman as a treacherous opponent that had to be overthrown before Christianity could be established. Tylor enlisted Harrison to make a collection of masks for Oxford and the former reverend apparently continued to send artifacts to that museum for many years. (Harrison, 1925:87,107,171-3)

Contemporaneous with Harrison's axxount is another made by the Methodist, Rev. B.C. Freeman who arrived in Skidegate in 1893 and stayed fifteen years. It is in Freeman's The Indians of the Queen Charlotte Islands (c. 1910) that one finds the story of Gedanst (Amos Russ), the Haida who was instrumental in laying most of the ground work for the missionary effort in Skidegate, New Kloo and Haina. (Freeman,1910:9-10; Dalzell,1968:98-99) Freeman's little book is another valuable reference to Haida culture and history of the late 19th Century. Large parts of his account are quoted in Thomas Crosby's book (1914) and comprises most of what that author has to say about the Haida. Freeman, unlike Collison and Harrison, demonstrated that he is aware of prevoius ethnographic work done in the Charlottes and his book suffers less from the heroics of Christian missionary thought.

IV. The Early Travellers

From around 1870 to the turn of the century, white settlement and travel to the Islands increased. Numerous expeditions and temporary residences were made in the land of the Haida. Many left records of their stay which are an important part of the ethnographic literature. I am including here a few of the more prominent of these accounts, some of which are of greater value than others. (Excluded at this time are the major ethnographers who will be discussed in the next section.)

Francis Poole, a civil and "mining" engineer was the first white man to maintain a residence among the Haida on the Queen

Charlotte Islands. The Queen Charlotte Islands; A Narrative Of The Discovery And Adventure in the North Pacific (1892) is based on expeditions in1862-63 to the Islands to locate copper. The account is primarily a travelogue. His dealings with the Haida are superficial--as are his accounts of Haida material culture and political organization. It is indeed unfortunate that Poole's relationship with the Moresby Island people was not even more superficial, for one of the first smallpox epidemics to attack the Haida came as a result of his presence. Poole's observations are objective, and lacking in vitality. An analysis of his environment is restricted to criticism of the Hudson's Bay Company and American exploitation of the north. He is all but oblivious to Haida culture.

Alexander Mackenzie, chief factor for the Hudson's Bay Company, was the Islands first magistrate and first white landowner. His illustrated description of a collection of artifacts (1891) is an especially valuable source because he includes Haida names for the objects and often furnishes specific details as to their origin,use, and/or typologies. Included in his discussion are descriptions of Haida beliefs and potlatches. Unfortunately, the author fails to mention who his informants are and from whom he collected the objects.

The next book I am going to discuss has obviously left more than a few anthropologists uneasy in these politically-attuned times. Their queasiness, I submitt, is due to the book's title: The Siwash Their Life Legends and Tales; Puget Sound and Pacific Northwest by J. A. Costello (1895). Given the date, provenience, and intent of the author's work, the unfortunate choice of the word Siwash(which was not intended to be derogatory) may have sentenced this worthwhile book to premature oblivion by socially sensitive academics.

What Costello's book lacks in sophisticated formal theory, it makes up for in careful observations that comply in accuracy with major ethnologies. Costello was aware of the historical record as well as of the work of Judge Swan and Ensign Niblack, authors of two major works on the Haida of the time. Costello calls for a "systematic study of the mythology" of the Haida--to be carried out in the winter months during the various ceremonials--something that had rarely been done. His advice would be followed by John Swanton, author of the major monograph on the Haida. When reviewing Costello, pay particular attention to chapters XXXII and XXXIII, where the author lends some interesting insights into Haida art, feasts, slavery, and mythology.

George Dorsey wrote a brief article about his 1898 cruise in Dixon's Entrance, while on a collecting tour for the Chicago Museum (a tour apparently enlisting James Deans as a guide--more about Deans in the next section). The account is brief--only fifteen pages--but it contains some fine photographs of Haida people and villages by E. P. Allen. Dorsey's commentary is primarily a travelogue, and his analysis of the Haida people is that of an environmental determinist. However, as an historical document, there is some value in his descriptions of Queen Charlotte villages--most of which were abandoned at the time of his visit.

V. The Minor Ethnological Works.

There are some works done on the Haida that are not considered major contributions to the literature. Some nonetheless are fine contributions; for example, George Emmon's article "Portraiture Among the Pacific Coast Tribes" (1914) that discusses Haida and Kaigani art; Tylor's descriptions of Haida house posts

(1889 and 1902); and Charles Newcomb's brief history of white contact and the Haida people (1906).

On the other hand, some efforts are near disasters. Three that come readily to mind are fairly representative of this catagory where impressive titles or well-known authors may entice the unsuspecting reviewer. First, there is John Campbell's "The Origin of the Haidahs..."(1897). As a diffusionist, Campbell links Haida and Oceanic peoples. His evidence is sketchy and weak, based on a linguistic comparision that maintains Melanesian constituents. (He claims Poole as his major inspiration!) Another is Charles Hill-Tout's "Haida Stories..." (1898) which is nothing more than a confusion of legends and mythology that have a northern flavour--nothing that can be claimed as distinctly Haida. Hill-Tout borrows information on a wholesale basis from Charles Harrison and unfortunately, the good reverend's acumen in Haida mythology was not one of his strong points. Finally, Marius Barbeau's works on Haida art and mythology (1953-57) must be mentioned. Typically, the texts are frustrating, based in poor theory and historical research, and are often contradictory. However, his photographs do comprise a fine corpus of argillite carvings that can be of use to the careful student.

Another (rather prolific) author whose work should be included in the category of minor ethnologists is James Deans. His frequent travels to the Queen Charlottes and his close association with the Haida over a period of some 40 years make this worldy gentleman's works often very valuable--although his conclusions may not be entirely sound!

VI. The Major Monographs.

The first major monograph on the Haida was done by an American, Judge James G. Swan in 1874. This richly illustrated work provides researchers with some of the original tattoo designs used by the Haida. Besides using his own sketches, he often had native artists supply the graphics. After the experience of working many years with the Makah and their art, he believed that Haida symbolism would furnish the scholars of Haida art knowledge of the ancient history of those people--a concept closely linked to today's study of Haida iconography.

In 1870, the U.S. government sent Swan on a special cruise to Alaska to make a collection of Indian artifacts for the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876. This collection, and subsequent ones made by him for the Smithsonian Institution comprises one of the finest and most complete collections of Haida art in gold and silver as well as argillite and wood.

In 1884 Swan published "The Carvings and Heraldic Paintings of the Haida Indians," Again he relied on not only his own observations and drawings, but on those of a Haida, Johnny Kit Elswa. The article is an exciting one--certainly one of the earliest to systematically discuss Haida art in terms of symbolism and myth as derived from Haida informants.

The same year the above mentioned article was published, the expertice of the judge was sought by the B.C. Provincial legislature. The report he delivered is primarily ecomomic, but it includes a thorough history of white contact with the Haida. One of his finest and most often cited monographs was published in 1886: "Tattoo Marks of the Haida Indians..." He provides beautiful and informative descriptions of the tattoos illustrations

on male and female Haidas, and describes the social situations in which they are displayed. A theme prevalent in all of Swan's articles is his musings about the similarity between Haida art and culture and that of ancient Central American peoples. His diffusionist tendencies, however, never intrude into his analyses and are generally limited to a concluding paragraph.

The second major monograph on the Haida was done by a geographer, George Mercier Dawson, in 1880 and comprised Appendix A (pp.103-175) of the larger work: Report on the Queen Charlotte Islands contained in the Geological Survey of Canada for 1878-79. His account is based on personal observations sone in the summer of 1879--and it is significant that he credits Rev. Collison and Judge Swan as major sources for his Haida material (Dawson,1880:103). Dawson's account is repeatedly cited by authors of Haida ethnography, and the excellent photo-engravings of artifacts and village sites are frequently reproduced to illustrate apogee of totem pole carving among the Haida. His record is concise and filled with information on every aspect of the culture, but of particular interest are his descriptions of the village sites, houses and carved poles. Special consideration was given to dance typologies and Haida vocabularies. The only other article written by Dawson about the Haida appeared in Harper's as a travelogue. It is general and only mentioned here because it contains a rare photograph of Albert Edward Edenshaw and Chief Wiah. (Dawson, 1882)

I come now to an anomaly in the bibliography of Haida literature: an account writen by a Haida who has chosen to remain anonymous except for the literary epitaph: "A Full Blooded Haida Indian." The article, titled A Study of Haida Secret Societies, is also without a date--but by the style and content I imagine it belongs to the turn of the century. I have not as yet determined the authenticity of this document--if it is in fact genuine, it comprises one of the finest and most detailed accounts of a Haida secret society. Such an account is unprecedented in the literature.

Ensign Albert Parker Niblack's major work, The Coast Indians of Southern Alaska and Northern British Columbia (1890), was compiled from notes taken over three consecutive summers, 1885-87, while participating in a government survey of Alaska. Niblack acknowledges his debt to James Swan in the introduction. Many of the Haida and Tlingit artifacts collected by Swan for the National Museum are extensively illustrated and discussed by Niblack. The commentary is basically historic and limited to observations of the material culture. Discussion of the social culture is scant and recording of mythology is non-existent, yet the source is valuable for its descriptions of the material culture.

The major monograph on the Haida, as mentioned earlier in this paper, is John Swanton's Contributions to the Ethnology of the Haida (1905a) made during an eleven month stay (1900-01) on the Queen Charlotte Islands as a member of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition. Swanton acknowledges that he was familiar with only Dawson's (1880) and Franz Boas' (1889, 1898: two very insignificant articles in BAAS) work on the Haida previous to the publication of this immense piece of work. Swanton's field work actually resulted in three publications: the large Contributions..., and two highly compacted and valuable volumes--Haida Texts and Myths, Skidegate Dialect (1905b) and Haida Texts--Masset Dialects (1908). Preliminary and subsequent publications on the Haida by this author were also products of his short stay among the Haida.

In true Boasian form, Swanton seems to have been an indefatigable collector, but unlike Boas, he was capable of combining his field observations with some synthesis. It is particularly significant that Swanton spent a winter collecting data--hence his record of winter ceremonies, potlatches, kinship, rank, and ceremonial art is especially rich. It is indeed regretable that the separate monograph promised by this author on Haida art never materialized.

The scope of Swanton's work seems incredible when one considers that he spent but one winter with the Haida--and never returned. It is also interesting that Swanton's special field of interest was not the ethnography of the Northwest Coast but rather that of the Southwestern Indians. Still, his legacy is indespensible to the student of the Haida, although one wonders what his contribution might have been if he had continued his fieldwork for another season. Perhaps he would have answered those "many questions [that] did not present themselves until I had reviewed all my work at home." (1905a;9).

A well-written, summary of the ethnology of Swan, Dawson, Niblack and Swanton may be found in Edward Curtis' The North American Indian, Volume 11, The Haida (1916). The photography of course is Curtis' forte, and his highly sensitive portrayals of the people are a credit to his talent.

The next major monograph was not done until 1932 when George Peter Murdock spent a summer collecting data at Skidegate, Masset, and Hydaburg. The result was three publications: "Kinship and Behavior among the Haida," (1934a), "The Haidas of British Columbia" (1934b), and "Rank and Potlatch Among the Haida" (1936). Some scholars will probably maintain that Murdock's work is more sophisticated than Swanton--perhaps this is true-- but certainly for clarity and scope Murdock cannot equal the former's work. Murdock's material comes into conflict with Swanton's on the discussion of the Wagal or housebuilding potlatch. For a good in depth study of Murdock's view of Haida social structure vis-a-vis the potlatch, compared with that of Swanton, read Rosman and Rubel's analysis of the Haida potlatch. (1971:35-68).

Personally, I find Murdock clinical in his 1934a and 1936 articles; he suffers from an objectivity that completly externalizes Haida culture and people and makes their society appear static. The anthesis of this type of examination is probably found in Allen's excellent article on the Kaigani published in 1955: "Changing Social Organization and Kinship Among the Alaskan Haidas."

In closing, it can be seen that the literature on the Haida has come from a wide range of sources and perspectives. It has been a lengthy discussion to attempt to cover even some of the more prominent and notable sources. Sailor, missionary, businessmen, historian, and anthropologist have all written about the Haida. Yet, it seems surprising how rarely--if ever--open confrontation of issues has occurred in this literature as it has in sources about other Northwest Coast people. An analysis of the corpus of work done on the Haida can only therefore be a summary or a guide to the researcher and writer who will delineate those issues.

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