

BOOK REVIEWS

Fedje, Daryl W. and Rolf W. Mathewes (editors), *Haida Gwaii: Human History and Environment from the Time of Loon to the Time of the Iron People*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005, 448 pp. ISBN 0774809213 Cloth CDN. \$99.00 ISBN 0774809221 Paper CDN. \$39.95.

The background to the research described in this volume began in the mid 1970s when a young graduate student at the University of Calgary, Knut Fladmark, proposed in his dissertation that an understanding of the First Americans, how and when they adapted to the New World, might best be served by considering migration along the west coasts of Alaska and British Columbia. Knut Fladmark's foreword to *Haida Gwaii* provides a brief overview of this era and sets the stage for the sixteen papers that follow. These papers by twenty-seven scholars representing such diverse disciplines as palynology, botany, zoology, geography, ecology, archaeology, anthropology, geology, molecular genetics, and oral history make this book an essential acquisition for college and university libraries, and the personal libraries of anyone interested in or involved with research on the early peopling of the New World. It surely stands out as one of the best interdisciplinary volumes melding archaeological-paleoecological research that this reviewer has seen, and the 25 page reference section provides readers with an unparalleled resource of published and unpublished literature.

In proposing a west coast route, Fladmark set out to show that some areas of the coast were ice free in the late Pleistocene; that resources were available for humans to exploit; and that archaeological remains support the presence of humans in the area before 10,000 years ago. *Haida Gwaii* addresses these same themes in three parts.

Part 1: Paleoenvironmental History consists of six papers dealing with late quaternary geology of Haida Gwaii and surrounding marine areas, Hecate Strait paleoshores, vegetation, climate and plant resources, the evolution of endemic species and the history of vertebrate fauna. Collectively they show that older ice-free areas probably did exist on the now submerged continental shelf adjacent to the islands of Haida Gwaii; that the best evidence of a continuous refugium is in Hecate Strait; that the vegetative sequence saw tundra established by 15,000 BP giving way to coniferous forests around 12,500 BP; that molecular lineages of select animal species show long-term persistence of a complex ecosystem on the continental shelf distinct from the mainland and that these

lineages became the source populations for postglacial recolonization of the Pacific Northwest during the Holocene; and lastly, that the optimum interval for human migration was likely between 13,500 and 12,000 BP.

Part 2: Haida Traditional History includes two papers that examine the nature and transmission of Haida oral history and its relationship to scientific explanations of the past. The First Nations authors contend that the Xaayda (Haida) accurately remember historical events that occurred thousands of years ago and that their methods of transmitting their histories across generations preserve this authenticity. A selection of stories describing “a world mostly of water,” “ice women,” “grassland and the first tree,” “tidal waves” and “earthquakes” are recounted.

Part 3: Haida History through Archaeological Research includes eight papers that overview the cultural history of the region, describe excavations at selected sites, identify prehistoric settlement patterns and cultural traditions and link archaeological remains to shifting shorelines. Three major chronological units provide the framework for discussion. The Kinggi Complex (pre 8900 BP), the Moresby Traditions, (ca. 8900 to 5000 BP) and the Graham Tradition (ca. 5000 to 250 BP). The Kinggi Complex is represented by small sites, bifacial stone tools, and bone technology. Evidence suggests little contact with the mainland at this time and though there is a paucity of material culture, a maritime adaptation is implied. The Kinggi Complex ended about 8900 BP in Haida Gwaii with the introduction of a microblade tradition, the hallmark of the subsequent Moresby Tradition. The Graham Tradition witnessed the end of the microblade tradition and is associated with shell middens and assemblages containing significant amounts of faunal remains. There are no known sites in Haida Gwaii between 4000 and 2000 BP and thereafter the appearance of woodworking technology, large habitation structures, extensive trade, monumental and portable art and warfare signals the appearance of the classic Northwest Coast cultural pattern. Fedje and Mathewes report that “...the archaeological record demonstrates significant technological change and changes in adaptation, at least in resource procurement and settlement patterns (p. 375).

The importance of this volume, one of four in UBC Press's Pacific Rim Archaeology series, cannot be overstated. Whether your interest is Late Pleistocene/Holocene environments, the migration of the first peoples in the Americas, the foundations of an explicitly American maritime tradition, the Pre-Clovis/Clovis First Debate, or the utility of oral histories in scientific research, *Haida Gwaii: Human History and Environment from the Time of Loon to the Time of the Iron People* has much to offer. Of Haida Gwaii, an archipelago of more than 100 islands, 10,000 square

kilometers and 5000 kilometers of coastline, Fladmark has said "It is the sense of being in a truly special place, an awareness that one is in a very insular realm that has always followed its own unique directions distinctly removed from those of the adjacent continent" (p. xvii). This truly special place is well served by this volume.

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Kroeber, Karl (editor), *Native American Storytelling: A Reader of Myths and Legends*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004 viii, 136 pp., photographs, further reading, index. ISBN 1-4051-1542-4 Paper.

Karl Kroeber's collection of myths and legends is a marvellously diverse compendium drawn from the major cultural groups in North America. These "stories" ably illustrate the diversity of depth, metaphors, and styles of narration among First Nations. The work also shows how Native American storytelling differs from European traditions. Kroeber's introduction is a wonderful examination of Indigenous oral narratives, their meanings, and cultural significance, and also a basic guide to key aspects of Indigenous social meanings. Importantly, Kroeber reminds us how very little we know about Indigenous storytelling despite what a few "experts" claim (1). Kroeber asks the reader to approach each Indigenous story with an open mind. Moreover, he asks that the stories be read aloud before referring to his head-notes. Just as important is his decision to leave each story untitled, which allows readers to develop their own idea of what the story is about and where it may lead. Finally the twenty-three myths and legends themselves, despite their diverse origins, weave nicely together as a collection. Kroeber makes every effort to not only reflect the original narratives but to present differing conceptualizations of gender, origins, social norms, and proper relationships between all things. In short, Kroeber has created a reader for students, experts, and interested amateurs alike that permits an entry point into Indigenous oral literature without dishonouring the stories or their audience.

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Nakata, M. and M. Langton (editors), *Australian Indigenous Knowledge and Libraries*, 2005. Canberra, Australian Academic and Research Libraries, pp. 216, colour and black and white plates.

The papers included in this interdisciplinary collection of readings emerged out of a colloquium that brought together professionals, practitioners and academics to discuss the role, obligation and responsibilities of library/archive services in Australia with regard to Indigenous knowledge. Some of the papers are written from the perspective of the collecting institutions, others from the community and still others reveal the perspective of users. In the end, the collage of papers represent theoretical assessments, practical discussions about setting up library services, descriptions of existing programs, technical presentations about how Information Technology can be used, and more analytical papers on such issues as the transformative power of global trade agreements like the *General Agreements on Trade in Services*. In the end, it looks at the whole picture of a multitiered system in which local, regional and national constituents have a stake in how Indigenous knowledge is to be treated in the public sector.

While one might wonder about the transferability of the material from Australia to their countries with Indigenous populations such as Canada, the fit was easy for this reader. As I read each chapter, I was able to find Canadian counterparts in the discussion. Issues such as digital technology, protocol, intellectual property were easy fits and raised a number of thorny questions which Canadians have yet to discuss with their Indigenous populations. In a sense, it was surprising to realize that the Australian libraries/archives seem to be well advance on issues of dealing with Indigenous knowledge compared to other Western countries. The creation of Indigenous Knowledge Centres and the development of protocols for libraries, archives and informations services with regard to indigenous knowledge could provide blueprints for Canadian institutions to build upon as they finally develop the strategies and policies that need urgently to be put in place. The historical destruction of Indigenous knowledge, its current fragile existence and the uncertain future all demand immediate action to preserve and protect it. Protocols on the documentation, storage and proper use of Indigenous knowledge in Canada are past due.

Chapters that focus on issues such as the history of the archive, its role and function, the relationship between power and Indigenous knowledge and the issue of intellectual property provide powerful pieces that force the reader to reflect on how organizations in Canada that hold Indigenous knowledge have dealt with the issue. Unfortunately, a quick review of the literature and policy statements by our national/provincial libraries and archives show them as seemingly silent on the issue. These institutions have addressed the issue, but there is little in the public domain that would allow the reader to compare their response with the strategy embarked upon by the Australian state sponsored institutions.

The collection is an integrated set of multidisciplinary articles that focus on how state sponsored institutions relate to Indigenous knowledge, whether it be in the production, disposition or the archiving. One thread that consistently links the material in the book is the need for trust and the importance of building good relationships between Indigenous peoples, their communities and the collecting institutions. From the Indigenous perspective, it is clear that they feel they must be active in management and policy development concerning the collection of Indigenous knowledge by state sponsored institutions. Moreover, the difficulties in protecting such knowledge are associated with the oral and visual nature of much Indigenous knowledge and concepts. Collecting institutions have focused on displayable visual images, thus obtaining numerous artifacts, sometimes with dubious collecting procedures. Nevertheless, these artifacts have added to the collections. On the other hand, the lack of interest by collecting institutions in obtaining and maintaining oral knowledge has been most problematic in developing a body of Indigenous knowledge.

The authors raise questions of legal, academic and moral issues with regard to collecting, storing, and using Indigenous knowledge. While the collection was prepared for collecting institutions and the people who work there, non-librarians and academics will learn much from these thoughtful and insightful pieces of scholarship. The book is a well-written contribution to the issue of Indigenous knowledge and those interested in the topic will find it useful in both its theoretical and practical applications.

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Neylan, Susan, *The Heavens are Changing: Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity*. Montreal: McGill-Queens' University Press, 2003. xvii, 401 pp., photographs, maps, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. ISBN 0-7735-2573-4 Softcover.

Susan Neylan's *The Heavens are Changing* offers an innovative and thought-provoking examination of Christian missions to Tsimshian-speaking peoples of the Northern Pacific Coast. Neylan moves beyond the staid dichotomous studies that pit 'traditional Indians' against White missionaries. To Neylan, these encounters were far more complex. She focuses on the myriad of interactions between missionizing agents—White and Native—and their subjects, as well as how the encounters were influenced by Tsimshian concepts of class, clan, social, and religious organization. By avoiding a reification of 'traditional' Tsimshian society as well as Christianity, Neylan argues effectively that elastic understandings of Christianity and 'Tsimshianness' developed out of this colonial encounter, while she also recognizes that in the long run the encounter became one sided. By emphasizing that Christian encounters predate the arrival of missionaries, and that the appearance of missionaries and the arrival of different denominations—Anglican, Methodist, and Salvation Army—were largely initiated by the Tsimshian, she shows that Native people were active agents in their own proselytization. Essentially, Neylan illustrates both how the Tsimshian shaped and were shaped by Christianity. For instance, while totem poles were being destroyed or collected, the Tsimshian were erecting flag poles with ceremonies similar to those that once accompanied the erection of totem poles. Tsimshian nobles maintained their status and role in society by assuming important offices within the churches, and clan competition resulted in the introduction of other denominations into communities. While missionaries such as Thomas Crosby and William Duncan sought to create a new society based on Victorian traditions and social equality, pre-missionary patterns of status, faith, and understandings created very different visions of Christianity. In the end Neylan maintains that the Tsimshian became both Christian and Tsimshian. Hopefully, scholars will continue to incorporate Neylan's arguments into other studies of missionization amongst First Nations in Canada.

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Wright-McLeod, Brian, *The Encyclopedia of Native Music*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2005. 451 pp. ISBN 0-8165-2447-5.

Wright-McLeod (Dakota Anishnabe) has omitted few to no recorded North American Native artists in this comprehensive work which includes even those artists who have made only one recording. His decades-long background as a music journalist, a radio program host, and a freelance consultant of Native Music has given him good knowledge into who is doing what, and his extensive travel as a reporter for radio and print media gives him a wide view of the field. Indeed, his opening acknowledgments read like a “who’s who” of the Native music world.

The text is organized into section and then alphabetically by the performer’s last name. Although the sections lack a unified rationale, for those who know Native music they work. The sections are: Arctic/Circumpolar Region; Chicken Scratch; Contemporary Music; Flute Music; Peyote Ritual Music; Powwow Music; and Traditional/Archival Music. Native Music covers several genres, from the traditional classic flute compositions of R. Carlos Nakai to the country and powwow recordings produced by Ness Michaels of Sunshine Records. This enormous variety problematizes any formal definition of ‘Native’ music, so Wright-McLeod tells us that it is both the music and the musicians that make it Native. It’s music that is both ancient and a hybrid of the modern sounds that we hear today.

The brief descriptions of the artists are entertaining and occasionally give fascinating personal details. For example, Suzanne Bird’s bio reads as follows: “Winnipeg-based singer with an impressive vocal quality, but hampered by stage fright, broke out of her shell only long enough to record one album” (59). These usually brief biographies are followed by a very useful discography for each artist.

I admire Wright-McLeod’s single-minded focus on published recordings of Native music for he has had to omit some of the greatest recordings of Native music of all time, such as David McAllester’s work among the Navaho and Alan Merriam’s recording of Flathead song. He does include a few of the important works of professional ethnomusicologists such as Frances Densmore and Willard Rhodes because they had recordings published, and he points out that there are millions of unpublished collections throughout the world in museums and universities. A few details need attending to. For example, Nattiez and Beaudry made a good argument to classify Inuit throat sounds as games, not songs, yet Wright-McLeod classifies them as songs.

Overall, this is an excellent overview of Native Music and shows the remarkable burgeoning of the field in little more than three decades. I for

one, will make good use of my *Encyclopedia*, even the list of Native contributors to film soundtracks satisfies some longheld questions about their origin.

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