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The Canoe Rocks: Alaska's Tlingit and the Euramerican Frontier, 1800-1912. By Ted C. Hinckley.

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portray Black Elk first and foremost as a “traditionalist”—a concept that emerges only in the mid-twentieth century as a consequence of reaffirming past religious identities.

Holler goes on to discuss the popularization of Sun Dancing through the 1950s and 1960s by the tribal council and the resistance this popularization met by the emerging traditionalist subculture, sparked in particular by the American Indian Movement of the early 1970s. Holler sees the emergence of Frank Fools Crow as the “most respected traditional leader on Pine Ridge” and as the most “influential interpreter of the Black Elk tradition.” I know from personal experience that, although there are some Lakota on Pine Ridge who see it this way, there are many others who would not agree. Certainly the most publicized leader is Frank Fools Crow, so in that sense he is a visible presence who fostered traditional development and a Christianized perspective. However, today there is great diversity on the Lakota reservations, and many distinctive Sun Dance traditions are emerging under different leaders whose prestige and followings are quite large even though there is little or nothing about them in print. Other than this cautionary note, I found Holler’s book very informative, well written, and deserving of careful study. His closing discussion and dismissal of the “dual religious perspective” on Black Elk is also highly valuable and opens the door to an emergent and complex view of native religionists that requires a more nuanced interpretation and greater sophistication in handling primary sources. All in all, this is an important, well-written, and valuable work.

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The Canoe Rocks: Alaska’s Tlingit and the Euramerican Frontier, 1800–1912. By Ted C. Hinckley. New York: University Press of America, Inc., 1996. 458 pages. \$56.00 cloth.

“There will always be those who insist that the acculturation of the Tlingit was essentially a dreary, if not a desperate, travail” (p. 432), but historian Ted C. Hinckley is not one of them. In fact, Hinckley contends that “Euramerican”/Tlingit interaction “manifested an acculturation metamorphosis as unique as the remarkable [Tlingit] people themselves” (p. 10), resulting in a “cultural accommoda-

tion" that "had to rate among the more successful" (p. 416). The success of Tlingit adaptation to Russian and American colonization forms the main theme in Hinckley's whiggish and exhaustively detailed history of Indian/white relations in what is now southeastern Alaska.

Canoe Rocks begins in the mid-1790s with the Russian-American Company's initial advance into Tlingit territory—first to Yakutat and then south to present-day Sitka, where in 1799 Ivan Baranov established the most important Russian outpost in southeastern Alaska. In spite of their imperial ambitions, the Russians maintained only a precarious foothold on the north Pacific coast. Not only were they in constant danger of Tlingit attack, they were also consistently duped by better-supplied European and American traffickers and the commercially savvy Tlingit. Hinckley's narrative steers the reader from this early phase of foreign commercialization to the twentieth century, when the Tlingit willingly integrated themselves into American society. Underlying the details of this century-long transformation is Hinckley's belief that the strength of the Tlingit character, combined with a kinder, gentler Euramerican occupation and a lush environment, assured an outcome somehow more favorable than on previous North American frontiers. "Due largely to their own exertions, but also blessed by geography and assisted by white humanitarians," Hinckley writes, "[the Tlingit] had escaped the reservation and its corrupting annuity goods dole" (p. 416).

Hinckley's previous works, which include *The Americanization of Alaska, 1867–1897* (1973) and *Alaskan James G. Brady: Missionary, Businessman, Judge, and Governor, 1878–1918* (1982), have focused on the role that white politicians, military leaders, businessmen, missionaries, and frontiersmen played in "Americanizing" the emergent territory of Alaska. It is not surprising that his present work reflects this perspective. In fact, part of Hinckley's motivation for writing this book was his "sizeable files of research," which were amassed, at least in part, while conducting research for his earlier books (preface). The result, based largely on government documents, company records, newspaper stories, and travel accounts left by Euro-American observers, is a study that tells us more about Euro-American than Tlingit motivations and beliefs. To be fair, Hinckley does not pretend to focus on Tlingit culture or even Tlingit personalities and clearly acknowledges that he is concerned primarily with "Euramerican" and Tlingit interaction and the "external forces" that "modified Tlingit lives" (p. 417).

The most valuable aspect of Hinckley's approach is that he not only has conducted extensive research, but he has taken the time to recreate a history of Tlingit/Euro-American relations in rare detail.

In his discussion of the Russian period, Hinckley reconstructs Russian/Tlingit battles (as well as Tlingit clan alliances) from Russian-American Company (RAC) histories and reports. He provides the reader with good accounts of the Tlingit destruction of Sitka in 1802, Baranov's reconquest of Sitka in 1804, the Tlingit sacking of Yakutat in 1805, the stillborn Tlingit "campaign" of 1806 (doomed because of dissension among the clan heads), and the last Tlingit assault on Sitka in 1855. Hinckley paints a picture of the Tlingit as strong, warlike, and shrewd. In spite of their increasing dependence on European goods, during this initial sixty-year phase of Euro-American intrusion the Tlingit "still enjoyed a remarkable degree of socio-economic autonomy" (p. 46).

The American period signaled an important transition from the fur-trade era—where the Tlingit had manipulated trade and maintained control over their culture—to a phase of white settlement, commercialization, and acculturation, enforced initially by the U.S. Army. Hinckley praises the nearly twenty years of military government in Alaska. The armed forces were crucial to Alaskan economic development—"road surfacing, waterfront improvements, fire fighting services, and much else were handled by the men in blue" (p. 97). According to Hinckley, the army also intervened valiantly to stop the Tlingit from practicing such traditions as slavery and blood atonement. Moreover, the military administered justice to whites and Indians alike, and carried out the responsibilities of an Indian agency (since the Office of Indian Affairs did not extend its services into Alaska).

Was the military impartial in its duties? Hinckley contends that, on balance, it meted out justice even-handedly and did not promote the interests of white boomers over those of the Tlingit. "Certainly [the military] did not perceive of themselves as mere catspaws colluding with the West Coast businessmen," contends Hinckley. "For all the Caucasians' ethnocentrism, America's army, navy, and Revenue Marine officers generally wished to protect the Tlingit from the more predatory whites as well as from fellow Natives" (p. 122). Even more importantly from Hinckley's standpoint, "no Alaska Indian Agency with its debilitating annuity goods arrived with General [Jefferson] Davis" (p. 121). Students of Tlingit history might take offense at Hinckley's overwhelm-

ingly positive interpretation of military rule. The naval bombings of Kake (1869) and Angoon (1882) certainly call into question the benevolence of military justice in late nineteenth-century Alaska.

While the first half of *Canoe Rocks*—from Russian occupation through America's military rule—focuses largely on the physical conflicts between Indians and whites, the second half of the book discusses the ideological confrontations over the place that the Tlingit would occupy within American Alaskan society. Would they receive equal education and the right to claim land and political rights as full citizens of the U.S., or would they be marginalized on reservations, economically irrelevant, politically disenfranchised, and socially separate?

Many of these questions were answered by the Organic Act of 1884. The act did not extend citizenship to Alaska Natives, but owing to the efforts of Sheldon Jackson—Presbyterian missionary, general agent of education, and founder of the Sitka Training School—the legislation sought to advance Tlingit assimilation by banning the "importation, manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors" and calling for the education of all children of the territory "without reference to race" (p. 195). As in the first part of the book, Hinckley's depiction of the Tlingit's Americanization includes more white than Tlingit personalities. Fortunately, these later chapters also offer glimpses into the ways that Tlingit people themselves responded to change. Hinckley engages in an abbreviated but welcome account of how Tlingit social institutions, such as the potlatch and traditional property rights, were increasingly challenged by American intrusion (pp. 199–200). He also discusses the debate within the Tlingit community over whether to resist or accommodate social change. His presentation of the struggle between Tlingit traditionalists and the Tlingit "vanguard" is one of the few places in the book where Hinckley not only introduces Tlingit voices, but also conveys the dissent within the Tlingit community that attended the seemingly inexorable march toward "civilization."

Hinckley's chapters on Tlingit work and urbanization reveal how economic opportunity (and necessity) transformed the Tlingit into an urban workforce. The Tlingit quickly made themselves important components of the expanding Alaskan economy. In Hinckley's narrative, salmon canneries, sawmills, and mines offered Indians untrammelled economic opportunity. Rather than seeing this process as exploitative, Hinckley uses evidence of Tlingit economic participation as proof that capitalism and West-

ern civilization offered the Tlingit more options than they enjoyed before Euro-American contact. Those who "bemoan" the "Westernization of Native Americans," lectures Hinckley, "should remember that they often perceived their creeping acculturation as just that: minor life enhancements" (p. 34). Moreover, Hinckley reminds those of us who romanticize precontact indigenous lifestyles that "laboriously hacking out a canoe, improvising crude repair of a child's shattered tibia, hunting an infuriated thousand pound bear with a torch and spear, or consistently braving dangerous waters in search of food are dubious freedoms" (p. 371). That Tlingit people embraced capitalist market relations is evidence enough to Hinckley that the "stereotype of the cruelly victimized colonial subject" did not exist in southeastern Alaska (p. 235). The book ends with the remarkable efforts of the "vanguard" generation to remake themselves in the model of good Christian citizens.

Canoe Rocks often reads like a grand success story. For those who take a more critical view of Native America's incorporation into American society, Hinckley's optimistic tone will ring hollow. He would try to convince such skeptics that Alaska's frontier was more benevolent than the stateside American West. Indian massacres "never disgraced America's Far Northwest frontier" (p. 420). Rather, the slow occupation of Alaska facilitated "a symbiotic invader-indigene cooperation" (p. 421). Congress discouraged settlement by refusing to extend general land laws to Alaska until thirty years after its purchase. Settlers and profit-seekers who did come to southeastern Alaska were not agriculturalists, and consequently their imprints on the landscape were more "ephemeral" than on previous frontiers (p. 327). U.S. authorities did not manage Tlingit affairs with a heavy hand, with the exceptions of slavery and witchcraft, and only "when these practices threatened Tlingit life" (p. 421). U.S. incursions mostly "advanced Tlingit unification" and offered new opportunities for the Tlingit to satisfy their entrepreneurial desires (p. 421).

In Hinckley's view, the adoption of Western ways or the exodus from traditional village sites to urban areas reflected the Tlingit's "restless urgings" to move closer to the centers of commerce, not sheer economic necessity. Even the transfer of Tlingit arts, crafts, and ceremonial items into white hands is seen as a blessing, for in "the world's finest museums, the artifacts got far better protection than along the damp North Pacific coast" (p. 427). The incorporation of indigenous peoples into the world market economy is

essentially seen as an uncoercive process resulting more from native preference than European force.

Scholars who see native cultural survival and the continuity of indigenous traditions and beliefs as shaping the processes of historical change will have problems with Hinckley's interpretation. While he admits that "old habits, revered institutions, and petty pleasures stubbornly hung on" (p. 376), his argument stresses the degree to which Tlingit people remade and redirected their lives in a determined effort to "discard the old way for the new" (p. 385). Hinckley seems to side with the assertion by Boasian anthropologist Philip Drucker that, except for "a few relics of ancient patterns . . . Northwest Coast culture must be regarded as having disappeared, engulfed by that of the modern United States and Canada" (p. 429). To Hinckley, the Tlingit gained access to a world filled with more "societal options" than before 1800—a world of "Youthful Alaska Native Brotherhood patriots lustily singing their organization's marching song, 'Onward Christian Soldiers,' and smartly saluting the stars and the stripes" (p. 429).

Certainly Hinckley's work shows that many Tlingit people embraced economic change and became important actors in the development of American Alaska. This is a welcome theme. However, by drawing a line between past and present, between traditionalists and the vanguard, Hinckley fails to convey a complex picture of the relationship between Tlingit culture and economic change. Instead he offers a portrait of culture as a fixed point from which the Tlingit inevitably move, rather than as a dynamic, constantly changing force that continually influences the present. Hinckley is like a respectful tourist in this sense: Tlingit culture—with its "entertaining rituals and colorful ceremonies, all so reflective of their magnificent natural environment" (p. 37)—is a thing of the past, "doomed" by missionaries and "subverted" by the "Tlingit's own imitation of Caucasian society" (p. 419).

Another side effect of Hinckley's tendency to fix his gaze on Western culture's displacement of traditional Tlingit culture is that he universalizes Tlingit motives toward economic gain. Repeatedly he describes the Tlingit as "every bit as materialistic and almost as fluidly class mobile as the polyglot Americans" (p. 419). Hinckley generally conflates Tlingit materialism and individualism with the American concept of "conspicuous consumption" and other bourgeois values (p. 29). "Like the various nineteenth century Euramerican frontiers which so excited socio-economic

mobility among restless Caucasians," writes Hinckley, "the lucrative fur market aroused individual Tlingit ambitions" (p. 33). Except for one allusion to the concept of *social capitalism* (a term other scholars have used to describe traditional Tlingit economics), the reader gets the sense that Tlingit people and Americans shared similar economic motivations. However, to depict both Tlingit and American actions as embodying universal human impulses toward wealth acquisition distorts reality. This is where a more in-depth discussion of traditional Tlingit culture (i.e., the potlatch complex) might have strengthened Hinckley's book. How can one understand Tlingit desire for accumulation without understanding that materialism, through ritualized giveaways, not only bolstered individual prestige, but also honored ancestors, conferred property rights, and cemented reciprocal relations among clan opposites? How can one understand Tlingit individualism without realizing the degree to which individual interests were tied to concepts of social responsibility?

For all the ways that Hinckley cuts against the grain of current historiography, he at least affirms that the Tlingit were historical actors or "determinants" (James Axtell's phrase) rather than "victims" of historical change (p. 432). "The Tlingit reacted vigorously to re-direct their lives," observes Hinckley, "and in doing so significantly influenced Alaska's Euramerican settlement" (p. 430). Ironically, unlike cultural Marxists and social historians who first used the concept of agency to reveal the ways that working class populations challenged capitalist notions of progress, Hinckley employs *agency* in an interpretation that stresses the willing assimilation of Tlingit into American society and the capitalist market economy.

If Hinckley had carried his story beyond 1912, his argument coupling agency and assimilation would prove far less tenable. Hinckley picks 1912 as his ending point because that year signaled an important break from the past for many Tlingit. In the village of Kake, Tlingit town officials nailed their "witchcraft, superstitions, and other dark things" in a box signifying their "complete change of beliefs." Later that year, "other determined Tlingit . . . also publicly renounced the beliefs of their grandparents, while embracing those of Christian Euramericans" (p. 385-86). The 1910s and 1920s were indeed high points of Tlingit assimilationist fervor as the vanguard generation renounced tribal customs in their quest to obtain citizenship. However, by the 1940s, social and economic discrimination had dulled Tlingit enthusiasm for

total assimilation. By then, many former Tlingit assimilationists were advocating reservations as a way to protect their natural resources. Moreover, since the 1960s the urge to embrace American culture uncritically has given way among many Tlingit to a renewed commitment to preserve traditional ways.

Although Hinckley's study may not please all readers, it is the only published history of the Tlingit during the early stages of Euro-American contact. No one else has tried to write a synthesis of Tlingit/white relations that looks at economics, politics, and society. Hinckley should be praised for attempting such an ambitious project. *Canoe Rocks* contains a multitude of facts and stories that will satisfy any reader interested in Alaskan history and in Indian/white interaction on the Northwest Coast. Hinckley's bibliography must be consulted by any student of Alaska or the Tlingit during this time period. Scholars will still find value in Aurel Krause's *The Tlingit Indians* (1884), Frederica de Laguna's *Under Mount Saint Elias* (1972), and the works of Philip Drucker and, more recently, Serge Kan, but Hinckley's book must be consulted by those interested in Tlingit history and culture.

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The Cherokee Cases: The Confrontation of Law and Politics. By Jill Norgren. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1996. 212 pages. \$9.00 paper.

As Vine Deloria, Jr., states on the back cover of Jill Norgren's latest book, *The Cherokee Cases: The Confrontation of Law and Politics*, "Federal Indian law is largely the incidents of American history described in legal language." One of the most insightful ways to analyze and interpret the dynamic interplay between law and politics is to focus on a transformative era in history. This is the approach Norgren has taken in examining the historical context and ultimate consequences of three landmark Supreme Court opinions rendered by Chief Justice John Marshall: *State v. Tassels* (1830), *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1831), and *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832). Her method of analysis provides a focus through which we can better understand the fundamental issues of Indian law and policy in American history. The author postulates that an examination of the Cherokee cases can provide the foundation for