



May 2015

Renewing "That Which Was Almost Lost or Forgotten": The Implications of Old Ethnologies for Present-Day Traditional Ecological Knowledge Among Canada's Pacific Coast Peoples

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Recommended Citation

Newell, D. C. (2015). Renewing "That Which Was Almost Lost or Forgotten": The Implications of Old Ethnologies for Present-Day Traditional Ecological Knowledge Among Canada's Pacific Coast Peoples. *The International Indigenous Policy Journal*, 6(2).

DOI: 10.18584/iipj.2015.6.2.6

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Abstract

The pressure on traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) to solve socio-economic issues globally begs the question: What is the state of TEK today, given the economic, social, and cultural ruptures it has endured during the past 200 years? The author traces how historical collaborative work between ethnographic pairings of "insiders" and "outsiders" created partnerships between some prominent anthropologists and local Indigenous research collaborators. Indeed, most of the ground-breaking anthropological work of Franz Boas and others concerning Canada's Pacific Northwest coast culture area depended on collaborations with George Hunt and other trained Indigenous field workers. Much of their long-standing fieldwork data collection and writings involved their female relatives and anonymous women's collaboration, lending an accumulated, but unacknowledged, thoroughness to present-day TEK. Future policy concerning collaboration between non-Indigenous academics and Indigenous communities should take into account the lessons to be learned from these historical practices.

Keywords

ethnology, traditional ecological knowledge, Indigenous peoples, Canada's Pacific Coast

Acknowledgments

Dianne Newell wishes to acknowledge the support of the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study, Stellenbosch, South Africa, where as a STIAS Fellow she completed and presented an earlier draft of this article.

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Renewing "That Which Was Almost Lost or Forgotten": The Implications of Old Ethnologies for Present-Day Traditional Ecological Knowledge among Canada's Pacific Coast Peoples

Indigenous policy rarely operates with a sophisticated understanding of either traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) or the anthropological record, which, I will argue, forms an integral component of present-day TEK. The unrealized societal and commercial potential of TEK, what Fikret Berkes, Johan Colding, and Carl Folke (2000) define as “a cumulative body of knowledge, practice, and belief, evolving by adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment” (p. 1252), fuels global interest in TEK today. Acquiring TEK is internationally desirable for reasons ranging from policy development around climate change and the achievement of sustainable resource development practices, to the protection of biodiversity and rare species, and to the creation of novel commercial products for pharmaceutical companies, health food enterprises, and eco-friendly clothing and cosmetics manufacturers. Not surprisingly, TEK has become an especially “hot” issue in the realm of intellectual property (IP), with IP vis-à-vis pharmaceutical companies being the extreme case. For these reasons, many Indigenous communities, no matter how isolated from “modernity” they might have appeared to be in the past, are now confronting, resisting, but often also accommodating, incursions of multinational corporations of all sorts into their ancestral territories. Numerous Indigenous communities find themselves engaged in difficult, mainly legal, struggles for land and the protection and renewal of their traditional resources and cultural identities, including their Indigenous languages, which, like their territories and traditional resources, are vital to the cultural transmission of TEK. Thus, Indigenous communities everywhere have a real stake in understanding, recording, negotiating, and protecting their storehouse of increasingly valuable TEK.

Because Indigenous communities throughout the world have experienced the effects of industrialization for over a century, most of them have suffered major ruptures in their ability to participate not only in the intergenerational, oral transmission of TEK but also in its practice. This article seeks to contribute to these contemporary discussions around the present and future of collaboration concerning TEK by asking: What is it that survives? How has it survived? It suggests that the historicization of TEK is necessary for understanding its worth both to the Indigenous communities, families, and the individuals to whom it belongs, and to the outsiders who covet access to it. Thus, I turn to anthropology, which as a field of knowledge and practice has a long history of collecting, recording, transcribing, and publishing snapshots of traditional knowledge passed down from the ancestors of current Indigenous societies. It is inevitable that the body of anthropological knowledge social scientists have acquired over years with the participation of, and frequently in collaboration with, anthropologists and Indigenous peoples has become incorporated into the contemporary TEK of descendent communities. I use as a leading case of historicizing TEK, the North American Northwest Coast Culture Area, a designated ethnographic area, which occupies an influential place in the history of North American anthropology.

Canada's Northwest Coast Culture Area

The Northwest Coast (NWC) Culture Area, extensively surveyed in Wayne Suttles' massive volume (1990) in the Smithsonian series on North American Indians, encompasses the 1,500 mile long stretch of Southeast Alaska, British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, and northern tip of California that is

situated between the coastal mountain ranges to the east and Pacific Ocean to the west. Ninety-five percent of the culture region so identified is located in Canada's Province of British Columbia.

Marking the fjorded coastal area of British Columbia are scattered islands, numerous bays, sounds, and deep inlets, soaring coastal mountains, dense temperate zone (northern) rainforest, and major rivers that penetrate the coastal mountain ranges into the high ranges that separate the coast from the highlands of the interior. Until recently, this area was host to massive wild runs of five species of Pacific salmon (genus *Orcorhynchus*), which together with ancient stands of Western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*) forests shaped and defined the lives and livelihoods of Northwest Coast Aboriginal peoples. The intricate social and cultural strategies for resource exploitation, preservation, and redistribution enabled Northwest Coast peoples to live at a level and population density well above the average of the world's non-agricultural Indigenous societies. Ceremonial and oral traditions and cultural practices were strongly preserved and maintained through the *potlatch*: the central institution, government, identity, and cultural and social connections common to all Northwest Coast groups, but unique to this culture area. The potlatch continues in its modern iterations to be a complex, prolonged public feast at which events of social importance are proclaimed and validated, with ceremonials, story-telling, gift-giving, and the redistribution of wealth (Jonaitis, 1991). The language variety of Northwest Coast peoples have created major linguistic groupings with kin groups occupying dispersed villages in separate, distinct territories.

For most Northwest Coast peoples, direct contact with Europeans occurred only at the end of the 1700's, and wholesale and longstanding involvement with European newcomers unfolded throughout the area only within the context of the industrial fisheries during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Newell, 1993). Indigenous families and communities were already engaged in this industry when anthropologists first arrived on the scene in the mid-1880s, a significant point to which I will return.

Ethnographic Fieldwork: Pairings of "Outsiders" and Aboriginal "Insiders"

North American and European museums from the earliest days of the discipline of anthropology sponsored ethnographic explorations into the NWC culture area. The area seemed ideal for the salvage ethnologists, who in the later 1800s and early 1900s wanted to rescue pristine cultural elements before they were swept away, as already appeared to have happened elsewhere on the continent under the spread of modernity (Cole, 1995). Anthropological research on the Northwest Coast not only involved the usual recording of informants who were insiders, but was a collaborative activity involving "outside" anthropologists pairing with skillful "insider" Aboriginal translators and interpreters, some of whom developed into specialized and independent-minded ethnographic and linguistic assistants or consultants. It was long thought that the use of Aboriginal collaborators to write ethnology was a seldom-used method, but in truth, individual studies of particular Indigenous collaborators reveal that their direct, voluminous contributions quickly became commonplace on the Northwest Coast (Clifford, 1988; Cole, 1999).

The best-known example of such collaborations is the fieldwork pairing of German-born and educated American anthropologist, Franz Boas, with George Hunt. Hunt (Maxwalagalis, Q'ixitasu') was a son of a Tongass Tlingit noble woman of southeastern Alaska, Mary Ebbetts (Ansnaq), and a White trader who

moved to Fort Rupert, the site of the ancient Kwakiutl village of Tsaxis. There, through marriage and adoption, Hunt became an expert on the traditions of the Kwakiutl (today, Kwakwaka'wakw) people. Hunt produced for Boas over 10,000 pages of Kwakwala text with English interlineations. Due to the breadth, the depth, and the thoroughness of his contributions to the work of Boas over a 40 year period, almost full-time from 1891 until Hunt's death in 1933, Hunt has been recognized by the anthropological community as an exceptional ethnologist and a linguist in his own right (Berman, 1996, 2002; Cannizzo, 1983; Jacknis, 1991).

Other significant pairings on the NWC include Marius Barbeau, a British-trained French Canadian anthropologist and folklorist, paired with William Beynon. Beynon's father was a Welsh-born master of coastal steamers and sealers, and his mother was Niska (Nisga'a) from the Nass River village of Gitlaxdamks. A hereditary chief, Beynon married a high-ranking woman from the coastal Tsimshian village of Kitkatla. Like George Hunt, he was belatedly recognized as an accomplished ethnographer (Anderson & Halpin, 2000; Halpin, 1978; Nowry, 1995). By the time of his death in 1958, Beynon had worked for three decades with Barbeau and supplied him with 3,000 hand-written pages, totalling almost 750,000 words, of field notes. Charles F. Newcombe paired with Charlie Nowell, a Kwakiutl born at Fort Rupert who was married to the daughter of Nimpkish ('Namgis) Chief, and Edward Sapir of Canada's national museum, the foremost linguist of his generation, paired with Alex Thomas for work among the Nootka (Nuu-chah-nulth) of Vancouver Island. Like Hunt and Beynon, Thomas collected copious amounts of texts in his own language (Wright, 2012). Thomas McIlwraith did not exactly pair with or develop Aboriginal ethnographic assistants in the way that Boas and Barbeau had when he studied the Bella Coola people (Nuxalk) of the central coast in the early 1920s. McIlwraith's (1948) informants were nevertheless deeply involved in field observations for *The Bella Coola Indians*, a comprehensive, massive two-volume study not published until 1948. Some regard this work as one of the finest ethnographies ever written about a Northwest Coast people (Barker & Cole, 2003). James Pollard (Kixlanae) came closest to serving as an Indigenous field assistant. A former chief of the Kimsquit tribe, Pollard had a reputation for giving the most number of potlatches among his people, which to McIlwraith (1948) meant Pollard "could validate very fully his ancestral myths and the names embodied therein" (p. 340). McIlwraith (1992) also considered Pollard to be more worldly and up-to-date than the others, "keeping abreast of changing conditions" (p. 525). While McIlwraith employed a handful of Bella Coola men and their wives, it was Pollard who transcribed and translated all the Nuxalk texts that appear in volume two of *Bella Coola Indians* (McIlwraith, 1948).

Collaborations between "insiders" and "outsiders" were not necessarily exclusive arrangements. Before he worked with Boas, George Hunt had earlier served in the area as an interpreter for missionaries and colonial officials and with museum collectors and ethnologists such as the J. Adrian Jacobsen expedition for the Museum of Ethnology in Berlin, in 1881 to 1882. Boas himself engaged several Aboriginal field assistants in addition to Hunt. In the 1890s he employed Odille Quintal Morison, who was a respected Tsimshian healer, translator and interpreter, collector of ethnographic objects, and recorder of texts. The daughter of a Tsimshian woman, Mary Quintal/Curtis (later Mary Weah) and a French Canadian Hudson's Bay employee, Morrison taught Boas Tsimshian and for six years collected Tsimshian artifacts and texts for him (Atkinson, 2011). Henry Wellington Tate worked for Boas as field correspondent for Tsimshian material in the early twentieth century. A high-ranking Fort Simpson Tsimshian, Tate collected, transcribed, and translated a total of 2,017 manuscript pages of narratives from 1903 until his death in 1914. This impressive body of ethnographical data was central to Boas' (1912) bilingual

Tsimshian Texts and to his monumental compilation, *Tsimshian Mythology* published in 1916 (Maud, 1989, 2000a). Boas also worked closely with Barbeau's former collaborator, William Beynon, after Hunt's death in the 1930s, receiving from Beynon an extensive body of narratives, and translations from and photographs of Tsimshian peoples.

The Franz Boas and George Hunt pairing, 1886 to 1933. It was largely through his various pairings and late nineteenth century research trips to the Northwest Coast Culture Area that Boas eventually gained his reputation as one of the “fathers” of Americanist anthropology and the most influential anthropologist who worked among the Northwest Coast peoples prior to the mid-twentieth century (Darnell, 2000; Mauze, Harkness, & Kan, 2004). Among the collaborations, it is Hunt's work with Boas, and the seminal contribution of Hunt's female relatives, that stands out both for the quality and quantity of contributions.

Boas began grooming Hunt to be an ethnographer in the late 1800s. Hunt learned to write Kwak'wala in phonetic transcription; learned the meaning of texts, and how to take them down; learned how to conduct fieldwork, to observe culture, and to photograph (Jacknis, 1984); and learned how to collect and document objects (Jacknis, 1991). This early training, together with his skills and social standing, enabled Hunt to play in a major role in generating ethnographic data for Boas for four decades, from the 1880s through to the 1920s.

Boas set the tone for recording TEK throughout the Northwest Coast Culture Area by insisting that transcriptions be taken in the original native language—which were spoken, not written, languages—before translation into English, so he taught Hunt to use orthography, a standard alphabet for ethnographic transcription that Boas and his former student, Sapir, had jointly developed. Hunt followed this approach, as did Odille Morison, although Henry Tate did not. Ralph Maud's examination of the original Tsimshian manuscript material indicates that Tate always took down the information in English (Maud, 1989, 2000b). Barbeau, following Boas' lead trained Beynon in the art of phonetic transcription of Native language from the outset (Nowry, 1995). Standardization of practice is what allowed all of these anthropologists to engage trained Indigenous assistants to work directly with informants on their behalf: “[Beynon] records myths quite successfully and with good speed. He has them recited in Tsimshian and writes them in English at once, sentence by sentence. The work could not be done better if I were working with them,” wrote Barbeau to Sapir in 1915 (Nowry, 1995, p. 158). Or so Boas could only hope.

The “Kwakiutl Indians” were from the beginning the centerpiece of Boas' Northwest Coast anthropology. Ronald and Evelyn Rohner (1969) estimate that Hunt contributed the data for over two-thirds of Boas' 5,000 pages published on this group. A major step for Boas was his single occasion, over the winter of 1894 to 1895, of participant observation on the Northwest Coast, when, thanks to the arrangements of Hunt and Hunt's sisters, Boas witnessed and recorded a portion of the songs and customs of the winter ceremonials at the traditional Kwakiutl village of Fort Rupert (Tsaxis). Boas worked hand-in-hand with Hunt, the two of them fleshing out Boas' shorthand notes each morning (Jacknis, 1996). After Boas left Fort Rupert, Hunt stayed on to supply him with a continuous stream of notes on the remainder of the event. The winter ceremonials figure prominently in Boas' (1897) path-breaking 425-page ethnographic study, *The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians*, with George Hunt being fully credited. After his own name as author, Boas added, “based on

personal observations and on notes made by Mr. George Hunt.” The contribution certainly warranted this intellectually generous acknowledgement. According to Ira Jacknis (1996), “These bits of indigenous verbal data [collected and recorded by Hunt]—myth, song, or speech—were . . . integrated into the ethnographer’s explanatory prose, producing one of Boas’ most complex, variegated pieces of ethnographic writing” (p. 208).

Boas also trained Hunt as a collector of ethnographic objects, an area in which Hunt would excel. Hunt taught Boas early on about the futility of simply presenting his Kwakiutl informants with representations (photos, sketches) of specimens from museum collections and expecting to receive information on their cultural meaning, use, and iconography; according to their own customs, informants needed to have owned the piece or have “relevant ancestral privileges” in order to discuss them (Jacknis, 1996, p. 202). In the course of undertaking this novel area of ethnographic work for Boas, Hunt both developed a working collection of ethnographic objects, collecting in the Indigenous language an accompanying tradition or story for each one, and consequently became a major collector of objects for sale to museums—to the point, Ira Jacknis (1991, 1996) argued, that Hunt eventually identified himself first and foremost as a collector.

Boas and Hunt continually negotiated various points around Hunt’s independent collecting and transcribing practice. Boas, operating within the salvage paradigm of the late nineteenth century, repeatedly probed Hunt’s texts for clarification. At the beginning of the collaboration, Boas insisted that ambiguities among different narrators be resolved. A particular story collected by Hunt, although it matched an earlier version collected by Boas, differed in certain respects from both that version and the one that he and Hunt had already published. Regna Darnell (2000) observed that Boas fully expected in the early years, “that there would be a single correct version and that Hunt could identify it for him” (p. 45). Hunt wrote to Boas as early as 1895 about difficulties he had in writing what Hunt termed “the Indian ways of speaking” and explained, “as I told you Before [*sic*] no matter if you ask ten Indians about one History [*sic*] not two of them would speak . . . the same” (Darnell, 2000, p. 44). But it seems that different versions were nevertheless always tracked down and preserved, or at the very least incorporated into an integrated version, by Hunt. It was an approach that over time Boas learned to value. Writing to Hunt in the early 1920s, for example, Boas suggested that where conflicts of opinion existed among the various accounts, Hunt should not try to make things “uniform but simply say what everyone tells . . . although of course, we ought to know what is considered by the owner as the right way” (Darnell, 2000, p. 46). By now, the twenties, with the rapid social and economic change that had occurred in Northwest Coast Aboriginal communities, Boas was likely grateful for whatever could be salvaged, and perhaps Hunt was too.

Yet another point of negotiation around standardized ethnographic practice for Boas and Hunt was Boas’ insistence on verbatim transcripts. Despite Hunt’s re-assurances that when transcribing from dictation he was writing down the stories word for word (Darnell, 2000) from his field correspondence it is clear that Hunt often simply listened intensely and then reconstructed narratives later in his own words. Furthermore, it seems that Henry Tate when collecting and recording stories for Boas probably never produced verbatim transcripts, either. In his review of Boas’ (1916) monograph, *Tsimshian Mythology*, Marius Barbeau (1917) blamed Tate’s flawed data for problems with the book: Tate had in his interviews mostly listened to the telling and then only later wrote down whatever information he had absorbed. Tate was, according to Barbeau (1917), simply “loath to divulge to other natives that he was

really writing them down at all” (p. 561). William Beynon, on the other hand, sympathized with Tate’s practice: “Tate did not have the full confidence of all of his informants . . . nor the money to pay them” (cited in Maud, 2000a, para. 5). There may also have been other reasons this particular breach in scientific practice; dictation taken by insiders like Hunt and Tate may in some circumstances have seemed rude or implied lack of trust in the Indigenous speaker. In Boas’ correspondence with Hunt, we learn of the even deeper concerns of both men and of Hunt’s attempts to explain and resolve his breaches, when it came to applying scientific methodology. To Boas’ blunt question in 1918: “Did you get these meanings [of Indian names] from the old people, or do you translate them from your own knowledge of the language?” (cited in Darnell, 2000, p. 46). Hunt replied that when necessary he used his own judgement, drew on his own expertise. Writing phonetically, Hunt explained: “And if I am not Pleased the way they translate the names then I translate them the way I see it Right way to Put it. for it is not so Hard for me. Because I know one thing that lots of middle age men comes to me, and ask me about the History of there family and even there names [*sic*]” (p. 46). Once again, while Boas was instructing and supervising Hunt in the science of ethnography, Hunt was instructing Boas in the cultural ways and changing realities of the Kwakiutl.

Jeanne Cannizzo (1983) and Judith Berman (1996; 2002) have argued that in the end it was Hunt, not Boas, who created the representation of Kwakiutl culture that continues to shape, reflect, and constrain anthropological views of the Northwest Coast up to the present. And certainly that sort of influence on the part of the “insider expert” Hunt evolved quickly once Boas relied almost completely on Hunt’s fieldwork for his reports and papers; once, as the correspondence between Boas and Hunt just quoted suggests, the people whom Hunt interviewed looked at Hunt as the essential expert on their culture, history, and language. This does raise the question: How much TEK collected by Hunt was actually that of Hunt and of his relatives’?

Emphasizing Women’s TEK: Salmon Canneries and the Hunts’ Kwakiutl “Recipes”

In most areas of salvage anthropology, it is a case of White men talking to Indigenous men, who are usually high-ranking and elderly. The names, knowledge, and actions of women are less seldom recorded. It is understood today, however, that traditional knowledge held by women in Indigenous cultures is for a number of reasons special and often unique, and, as with men’s TEK, does not always circulate across gender lines. In most Indigenous communities, women were the primary harvesters of medicinal plants, berries, and vegetables; trappers of small animals; gatherers of shellfish and mollusks; makers of basketry and clothing; processors of food, hides, and bark, roots, grasses, and so on. Women are, in the words of the Alaska Native Science Commission (2012), “keepers of the knowledge about significant spheres of biodiversity in their own right, and as such, are the only ones able to identify environmental indicators of ecological health in those spheres” (“Role of Women and Children” section, para. 1).

Franz Boas knew, of course, that Indian women were the mainstay of the salmon cannery workforce and cannery villages. It was a reality he observed each field season. Boas conducted fieldwork in many coastal villages in which salmon canneries operated either on site or nearby (Rohner, 1969, see Appendices 2 & 3), and mostly during the summer canning season. He usually stayed with cannery owners and enlisted their assistance in finding and meeting with Aboriginal informants and translators. During the week, when the Indian men lived in their boats on the fishing grounds and the women worked in the plants,

women were practically the only Indians around the cannery villages. Simply put, Boas had to talk to the women most of the time. This female-dominated environment was not without consequence for his research findings, as his contact with Mrs. Spencer (Annie Hunt) of Alert Bay makes clear.

Annie Hunt was Boas' prime informant and contact in the early years of his fieldwork because she was Kwakiutl, a member of the well-connected Hunt family, and married to the equally well-connected, non-Indigenous cannery owner and storekeeper at Alert Bay, Stephen Spencer. George Hunt was her bother. From his first contact with her, in 1886, Boas considered Annie Hunt the "real find" at Alert Bay; she was, it is reasonable to infer, his inspiration for continuing to record women's knowledge. To his parents, Boas wrote in October 1886: "[Mrs. Spencer] relates well and is very gracious. I have obtained much about the usages of women from her. This is now an important part of my collection" (cited in Rohner, 1969, pp. 46-47).

By the 1900 field season, which he devoted to Alert Bay, Boas' afternoons were fully occupied with interviewing women, "on the gathering and preparing of food, and having them tell me about their medicines," and with collecting texts on menus and food preparation (Rohner, 1969, pp. 254-255). Boas worked especially closely that season with George Hunt's first wife, Lucy Homiskanis (T'lalili'lakw), a Kwakiutl woman from Hope Island from whom Boas learned so much that he acknowledged her in the preface to his great tome, *Ethnology of the Kwakiutl* (Boas, 1921). In *Ethnology of the Kwakiutl*, there are individual sections on "Industries" (the minutia of working cedar, for example, and making of everything from wicker baskets for wild carrots to digging sticks for clover, watertight boxes for boiling dried salmon to hooks for picking elderberries and frames for drying berries, to elaborate traps for catching migrating salmon); "Hunting, Fishing, and Food Gathering" (basically, using all of the products described in the "Industries" section); "Preservation of Food" (various techniques for cutting, roasting, smoking, drying, pickling, boiling); "Beliefs and Customs," and "Recipes" (an ethnology of Kwakiutl cooking and eating practices). Each section contains a wealth of women's traditional knowledge, specifically referring to what it is that women do, and how and where in their territories they do it, and how all this meshes with the roles of the menfolk. Hunt collected from both of his wives, Lucy, who died in 1908, and Francine (Tsukwani, T'lat'lalawizamga), a 'Nakwaxd'xw woman, material for the recipes section. Thus, aside from the anthropologist Boas learning to care about collecting women's knowledge because of the salmon-canning setting of his ethnographic fieldwork, he had an Aboriginal assistant who collected from his wives, sisters, mother, and other female relatives as a matter of course.

The Hunts' salmon recipes. The plan for the seventeen-year research project on recipes that dominated part one of Boas' 1400-page study, completed in 1916 and published in 1921 as *Ethnology of the Kwakiutl*, was briefly sketched out for Hunt in 1899: "When you continue writing for me, I would ask you to write first of all what I suggested to you last summer, namely, the cooking-book of the Kwakiutl, and then you might also study [*sic*] write down all the curious ideas they have about cooking" (cited in Berman, 1996, p. 236). In the end, "Recipes" constitutes an impressive 300 published, bilingual pages of details. In it we learn, for example, that only "old men," or only men of the "highest" rank or of "high" rank, or only the "old chiefs," or "chiefs," were invited to eat specific types of prepared food such as halibut skin; blistered, half-dried halibut; the roasted pectoral fins of salmon; and dishes of mashed currents and salal berries. Also detailed are discriminatory practices concerning butchering and serving of specific sea foods and the distribution of certain vegetables at meals, even the time of day certain

foods could be eaten, and by whom, and whether with or without drinking water, and with or without dipping the food in oil.

While the interpretive value of the extensive cultural data that Boas (and also on his behalf, George Hunt) collected from Kwakiutl women merits future study, we already have an inkling of the influence on later-day anthropologists of the large section on salmon recipes, beginning with Helen Codere in the 1950s. Codere's (1957) essay, "Kwakiutl Society," takes as its focus the Hunts' exhaustive study of "recipes" because, she explains, they exposed the everyday life of the Kwakiutl (the family meals), as well as the large gatherings and ceremonials (the feasts), and contained a wealth of detail "in context" (pp. 475-476), "minutely descriptive of social procedures as well as steps in food preparation" (p. 485). Sidney Mintz and Christine Du Bois (2002) argued in their extensive literature review on the anthropology of food and eating that a re-reading of Helen Codere's 1957 paper on Boas' "salmon recipes" suggests "just how much could be learned about social organization and hierarchy by carefully reading about how to cook salmon" (p. 100). Approaching at it from a different angle, the eminent French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss has revealed in an interview his indebtedness to Boas for "the Kwakiutl recipes . . . they gave me the key to certain mythological problems by revealing relationships of compatibility and incompatibility among foods, relationships that are not solely a question of taste," he said (cited in Mauze, 2004, pp. 78-79). Although Mintz, Du Bois, and Levi-Strauss all credit Boas for the work, Codere recognized the contribution of Hunt and his wives, something she pursues in her own celebrated fieldwork among the Kwakiutl.

Codere's (1957) fieldwork among the Kwakiutl in 1951 and 1955 gave her the opportunity to learn from the community how George Hunt had collected these recipes on the ground: "how he consulted with his wife on those details of food preparation that he as a man would be ignorant about; how he would occasionally have difficulty in recording how a certain thing was done and would take a walk, check with various people, and refresh his memory" (p. 476).

The Social and Cultural Implications of Old Ethnologies for Indigenous Policy: Renewing "That Which Was Almost Lost or Forgotten"

By the time Boas was writing up and editing Hunt's material for *Ethnology of the Kwakiutl* in 1916, the rapid expansion of the industrial fishery had already adversely affected the wild salmon stocks and would soon bring "scientific management" and commercial fishing practices into conflict with traditional knowledge about salmon and traditional fishing technologies, such as the use of fish barricades, which the state ordered destroyed. The state also created legally enforceable dichotomies that broke with the local Indigenous practices of producing for consumption and exchange and instead reserved most of the fish stocks for non-Aboriginal use. Northwest Coast peoples wanted their traditional ways respected; the newcomers wanted them displaced. This was in addition to an 80 to 90 percent decline from pre-contact levels of the BC Indian population (estimated to have been as high as 180,000) by the early twentieth century. In addition, the Northwest Coast peoples experienced the culturally damaging effects of a government ban on the central social, political, and economic institution of Northwest Coast communities—the potlatch. Other adverse conditions included the forced attendance of Aboriginal children at church-run residential schools, with their severely assimilationist agendas; clear-cut logging and large-scale mining developments; and by the 1980s, ocean ranching of salmon in open pens, which

threatened the traditional resources, livelihoods, cultural identities, and store of traditional knowledge of Northwest Coast Aboriginal communities, now self-identified (since the 1980s) as First Nations.

For Northwest Coast First Nations, old ethnographic accounts, such as those collected with Indigenous field assistance by Boas, Barbeau, McIlwraith, and others, as well as the testimony of present-day anthropologists and historical experts, are critical to the defense of First Nations territorial claims in court. The accounts are also used by First Nations in land claims negotiations with government commissions and in seeking moratoria on natural resource development that threatens the livelihood and identities of their communities. A crucial necessity in laying Aboriginal claim to land and resources for the claimant group is to prove the land use and occupancy—which are core elements of TEK—of their ancestors at the point at which outsiders first arrived. But those same accounts can be, and are, also used to deny rights and claims. Taking Indigenous claims (and the old ethnographies and understandings of TEK) to court has only been legally possible since the 1950s, and only practically feasible under Canada's constitution since the 1980s, but has, together with the decriminalization—hence the revival—of the potlatch in the 1950s, contributed immeasurably to the cultural and economic renewal of all Northwest Coast First Nations communities.

One of the strongest, clearest, and most fulsome expressions of contemporary community respect for and appreciation of early ethnographic fieldwork, and of its origins in the community itself, is to be found in the Nuxalk Nation's "Foreword" to the reprint of McIlwraith's (1992) *The Bella Coola Indians*. This study is for them "like fuel to a fire," and they go on to explain, "McIlwraith's recording [in the 1920s] of our history continues to affect our people today and will lead to better understanding tomorrow. We have been given a tool with which to rebuild and renew that which was almost lost or forgotten" (p. vii). The Nuxalk are not just talking about a "gift" from an anthropologist, for they recognize the input of their own ancestors in the generating of this valuable "tool"; they acknowledge that the book "is interwoven with the history, feelings, and spirituality of a strong people. [McIlwraith] listened and practiced, learned and understood the rich remnants of our people's oral history. We thus have these volumes" (p. vii). The community members do not suggest that everything in the book is written in stone; they simply claim it as theirs: it is of their past and their present. Most poignantly, they write that the study is about their future and, I would add, it provides the underpinnings of their TEK.

Among other Nuxalk Nation cultural initiatives, the House of Smayustya, created by Nuxalk hereditary chiefs, is a learning centre for the Nuxalk that collects published and unpublished writings, archival materials, and sound recordings and images, all of which underpin their contemporary struggle for land and resources and the revival of traditional knowledge in which *The Bella Coola Indians*, first published in 1948, has had a central role (Barker & Cole, 2003). Similar to the conclusion that anthropologists and historians have drawn about George Hunt's substantial contribution to the old Kwakiutl ethnologies published by Franz Boas, Barker and Cole (2003) concluded that "the Nuxalk elders," and previous generations of Nuxalk back to the time of creation, are the true authors of *The Bella Coola Indians*" (pp. 25-26).

Conclusion

Most Indigenous peoples today have suffered deep ruptures to their ability to participate not only in the intergenerational, oral transmission of TEK, but also in its practice. This was certainly the case for the

peoples and cultures of the North American Northwest Coast Culture Area. From its earliest days of development in the nineteenth century, anthropology as a discipline in North America has been heavily engaged in an interactive relationship with the peoples and cultures of this region. This engagement began right after the arrival of the industrial salmon fishery on the coast in the 1880s. Because of the nature of the salmon-canning industry, much of the TEK gathered by the durable pairing of Franz Boas and George Hunt appears to have come from female informants, including Hunt's two wives, his sisters, and other female relatives, as well as anonymous female cannery workers. We have a sense that mothers, wives, and various female relatives of other Aboriginal assistants working in the Northwest Coast may also have played an influential role in field studies elsewhere on the Northwest Coast.

Today, this anthropological legacy from the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century stands as a rich source for TEK in this culture area, but how are we to evaluate it in terms of authorship, the nature of its content, and its validity and universality at present for the future? For convenience I have framed my cursory examination of anthropological data gathering in terms of the insider/outsider dichotomy. Insiders were helping the salvage ethnologists transform TEK and the way it is transmitted through relationships of collaboration. Yet, it is clear from the discussion in this article that such an approach is problematic. First, there is a substantial Indigenous investment in the anthropological record of the Northwest Coast Culture Area, as informants, translators, and interpreters, and, importantly, as family members of ethnographic fieldworkers who collected, transcribed, and interpreted narratives. Transmission became increasingly a written rather than an oral process that was documented or illustrated with collected artifacts. And yet, it would be wrong simply to search for the TEK captured in the published ethnographic record (or, conversely, to dismiss the ethnographic record as having been collected strictly by outsiders). The Indigenous field assistants such as George Hunt, Henry Tate, and William Beynon also made personal adjustments to the training that Franz Boas and fellow anthropologists had given to them; as fieldworkers they developed (often informally) personal approaches to collecting, transmitting, and translating ethnographic information, including TEK. In these various ways, TEK in the Northwest Coast Culture Area has been subject to different types of transformations and filtering, not only by the Western scientists who conducted and supervised the fieldwork, but also by their Indigenous field assistants.

This history of insider–outsider pairing means that questions about the *purity* of TEK for the Northwest Coast culture area make little sense. It would be more useful to study closely the sifting and winnowing that has gone on for over a century: What implications does the independence of Aboriginal fieldworkers have for determining authorship, and perhaps ownership, of contemporary TEK? What does it tell us about the completeness and depth of our knowledge base? What implications does it have for future efforts to access TEK from this region? We need to know more about the Aboriginal engagement in the transmission of TEK through past anthropological projects in the Northwest Coast Culture Area. Future investigations would need to build on the current trend that shifts the focus from the well-known figures of the field of anthropology to their interactions with their Aboriginal fieldworkers, and from the published ethnographic record to the surviving field notes, field letters, and original manuscripts shaped and often generated by those who also worked in the field, the ancestors of contemporary First Nations of the Northwest Coast Culture Area.

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