

customs and needs are basic to formulating down-to-earth plans for betterment of living conditions.

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INDIANS OF THE URBAN NORTHWEST¹

ONE of the most interesting areas of aboriginal culture in America was the Pacific Northwest area. Under the impact of a century of contact with white people, the old culture has been largely destroyed, and much of its content and meaning can never be recovered. The present work is a collection of papers by various scholars who have been working recently on the Northwest Coast culture.

As the editor states in her preface, “. . . this book only attempts to focus upon the southern section of the Pacific Northwest, upon western Washington, and southwestern British Columbia; it deals primarily with the Indians of these regions, all of whom spoke languages which have been classified as Coast Salish.” The word “urban” in the title does not mean that the Indians are residents of the large cities, but rather an area along the inland waters which has felt strongly the effects of urbanization and industrialization.

The various papers in the book are written by specialists, and they are of more interest to specialists than to the general reader. The range is wide—diet, the Shaker religion, painting, music, coiled basketry, archaeology, language, physical type, folklore, etc.—so wide and so specialized, in fact, that one finishes with the feeling that he has seen a group of snapshots rather than an integrated movie.

Let us select a few items which would seem to be of interest to the readers of this particular review. The first chapter, “The Indians and Modern Society,” by Dr. Smith, presents a brief summary of the adjustment of the Coast Salish to modern civilization. Dr. Smith points out that “Their record of adaptation to industrial society is certainly better than that of

¹ INDIANS OF THE URBAN NORTHWEST. Edited by Marian W. Smith. New York: Columbia University Press, 1949. 370 pp. \$6.00.

many Indians classified as less primitive." She cites certain old economic practices and personal traits which may have assisted in this adjustment and concludes as follows: "To a certain extent Indian life in the urban Northwest just continued parallel to the effects of urbanization which dominated the area during the past century. The Coast Salish today are weighted down by amazingly few conflicts engendered by incompatibilities between the old and the new ways of life. Their major problems arise from their peculiar position as underprivileged members of modern society."

The paper on "Diet of a Food-Gathering People," by Trinita Rivera, is significant for its pioneer use of chemical analysis of Indian methods of preserving food. After analysis of two important items of Salish diet, smoked salmon and dried saskatoons, the author concludes that the Salish show very good sense about their diet. Their method of drying salmon she rates as "excellent according to modern nutritional standards." Thus, despite their lack of agriculture and domesticated animals, the Salish culture habits happened to provide them with a good year-round diet, so that they showed little sign of the common winter let-down arising from vitamin-C deficiency.

Helen Codere's brief paper on the Harrison Lake physical type is also of interest. Boas measured and described this type in 1891. It is characterized by "very small stature, a very flat nose with a very low bridge, and a very wide head and face." The stature of males is around 160 cm. on the average. Miss Codere finds this type persisting today in the same places where Boas found it. Its stability as a deviant type, in spite of some intermarriage with the tall Thompson Indians, suggests a Mendelian segregation of certain traits, but this problem awaits more data before the final answer can be given. However, the most interesting cultural datum about these short people is their own reaction to their size. Apparently they "do not feel small." The author surmises that certain Northwest Coast culture patterns which defined status in terms of personal achievement through inherited or acquired "power" might have made physical size completely unimportant to these people.

Another feature of the book is a personal document of some

fifty pages recorded from the narrative of John Fornsby, a famous old Salish shaman. In his ninety-two years this man has experienced almost the entire period of Northwest Coast contact with white civilization. This narrative is largely concerned with events, myths, shamanistic power, and ways of doing things in the old days. As such a document it has its value, but as a personal history it leaves much to be desired, for Fornsby never stands forth very clearly as a personality.

Other contributors to the book are Erna Gunther, Paul S. Wingert, George Herzog, Arden King, Morris Swadesh, Dorothy Leadbeater, June Collins, Eleanor Leacock, Joanne Schriver, and Betty U. Randall. The volume is well illustrated and it contains a glossary of tribal names and an extensive bibliography.

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THE PEOPLE OF ATLANTA¹

IN HIS preface, the author states: "It should be pointed out that this study is not a treatise on urban demography in general, but consists of an elementary population study within a particular frame of reference." The value of the book, as the author sees it, is that ". . . . no investigator to the present time has focused attention directly upon the demographic study of a single large southern city. This study attempts to fill that gap." On page 26 he adds that ". . . . as far as the writer can ascertain, never have all the modern demographic techniques been applied to the population of one city and particularly to a southern city." After a careful reading, this reviewer feels that the study falls short of the mark.

Generally speaking, McMahan's accomplishment is in the reworking of some census data pertinent to Atlanta, some registration statistics for the State of Georgia, and the presentation of these in graphic form. There is an occasional comparison of the data of Atlanta with those of Nashville, Dallas,

¹ McMahan, C. A.: *THE PEOPLE OF ATLANTA*. Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1950. Pp. xxiii, 257. \$4.00.