EARLY NISHGA-EUROPEAN CONTACT TO 1860: A PEOPLE FOR "THOSE WHO TALK OF THE EFFICIENCY OF MORAL LECTURES TO SUBDUE THE OBDURACY OF THE HEART"

E. Palmer Patterson
University of Waterloo

Cet article présente une vue d'ensemble des rapports Nishga-Européens jusqu'à 1860. Les Nishga apparaissent dans les premiers récits comme un peuple énergique et intelligent, capable de prendre en main ses propres affaires. Les Européens ont qualifié d'arrogants et hautains leur comportement et leur attitude. Au cours du XIXe siècle, une stratégie vigoureuse, inspirée par les chefs Nishga et adaptée aux circonstances, a constitué un tremplin pour faciliter le changement culturel et a caractérisé les nouvelles relations entre ce peuple et certains représentants de la culture européenne et Euro-canadienne.

This article presents a survey of Nishga-European contact to 1860. The Nishga appear in early accounts as an energetic, intelligent people who were in charge of their own affairs. This independent behavior and attitude struck some Europeans as arrogant and aloof. The vigorous adaptive strategy of Nishga chiefs provided a basis for culture change with continuity throughout the nineteenth century, and also characterized their relationships with those segments of European and Euro-Canadian culture with which they came in contact.

INTRODUCTION

The Nishga Indians of the Nass River valley, British Columbia became the focus of national attention in the early 1970s for their role in the British Columbia Indian land protest movement. The Nishga took a leading part in asserting the validity of the land claims of British Columbia Indians by pressing their rights to ownership of the Nass River valley through both the provincial courts and the Supreme Court of Canada. Although the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in 1973 did not accept their claims, it enhanced the Nishga case and encouraged Indian land claims in general (Berger 1981:219-254). Much less is known, however, of the early history of the Nishga. As one of four Tsimshian peoples (Coast Tsimshian, Southern Tsimshian, Gitksan, and Nishga; see

Seguin, ed. 1984:ix), description of Nishga culture is often generally subsumed under that of the Tsimshian.

In the late nineteenth century, missionaries, especially the Anglican missionary James E. McCullagh, gathered information about early Nishga history. Systematic study by anthropologists began in the 1890s with Franz Boas. Nevertheless, the Nishga have not been as thoroughly studied as the Coast Tsimshian. This may be partly the result of the accessibility of the Coast Tsimshian and interest aroused in them by another Anglican missionary, William Duncan. Duncan's Christian village of Metlakatla, founded in 1862, drew the attention of church officials, government leaders, and travelers. Metlakatla gathered most of its adherents from among the Coast Tsimshian, many of whom settled at the Hudson's Bay Company post, Fort Simpson, after its relocation in 1834. On invitation from the Nishga, Duncan was the first missionary to visit villages on the Nass River when he traveled there in April and September of 1860.

Continuous and relatively intensive contact between non-Indians and the Nishga began in 1864 with the arrival of the first resident missionary on the Nass River, the Reverend Robert R.A. Doolan. Doolan was a deacon of the (Anglican) Church of England and an agent of the Church Missionary Society. He evangelized the Nass River Nishga intermittently between 1864 and 1867 (Patterson 1981:337-344). Prior to Doolan's tour, not many non-Indians visited the Nass River and written sources for this contact are meager. The present essay is an attempt to reconstruct the broad outlines of the history of Nishga contact with non-Indians prior to the 1860s.

CONTACT AND TRADE BEFORE THE EUROPEANS

Although Tsimshian traditions tell of the migration of peoples from their various homeland locations to the Nass and Skeena Rivers, the general picture of Tsimshian cultural development derived from archaeological sources reveals a long, continued growth without sharp breaks or intrusions that would signify the introduction of major foreign influences. Archaeologists describe three horizons of culture in the Coastal Tsimshian area. The first of these horizons extends from approximately 2,000 to 500 B.C.; the second from about 500 B.C. to 500 A.D.; and the third from 500 to 1,800 A.D. (MacDonald 1970:240-254).

Archaeological artifacts indicate continuity throughout all three of these horizons and with historic Tsimshian artifacts. Geometric decorations are also found in all three horizons. In the second horizon, there is evidence of the development of woodworking, a characteristic feature of Northwest Coast Indian culture. Stone carving was also present at that time. Another

"classical" trait was the importance of marine foods in the Tsimshian diet. By the beginning of the third horizon, artifacts showing zoomorphic forms appeared. Similar findings apply to the Haida and Tlingit. This evidence supports the conclusion that there was a long tradition of sharing, interchange, and borrowing among these three Northwest Coast Indian peoples. This long tradition predated the cultural similarities noted in historic times.

Although both types of contact probably took place, myth and legend emphasize conflict rather than peaceful contact among the Tsimshian, Haida, and Tlingit. Often, kidnapped young women or their children returned "home" to their own place, where they became the progenitors of prominent leaders. Marriages took place between Haida and Tsimshian, and invading groups dispersed other peoples. After dispersing from their homeland of Temlaham on the upper Skeena River, the Tsimshian expanded southward against the Kwakiutl, to the northwest against the Tlingit, and into the interior against the Athapaskans. These movements represented local migrations of Tsimshian, Haida, or Tlingit and did not contradict the picture of the shared common culture of the three peoples.

Among scholars in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, migration was a popular notion and some exaggeration of the importance of family narratives of movement may have occurred (Duff 1964). The events of the history of some Northwest Coast Indian families came to stand for the events of the ancestors of the entire population. Movements of people were associated with floods, volcanic eruptions, and mud slides as well as with kidnapping, adventure, raiding, and trade. New communities were created by hiving off from parent communities.

Movements of both individuals and groups continued throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and were observed by non-Indians. Tsetsauts and Kitwancools settled on the Nass River. People moved from a flooded village site to a new site. Whether those dramatic movements ever involved major portions of the population is questionable. Rather, gradual change and small scale movement, mostly of nearby and culturally similar or identical people, seems to have been the pattern. In some cases, as with Tsetsaut or Carriers, assimilation to Nishga or Tsimshian culture took place.

The Nishga, and the Tsimshian generally, are divided into four exogamous clans: Eagle, Killer Whale, Raven, and Wolf. These clans, with their respective crests, each have subdivisions. By tradition, the Wolf and Eagle crests are the most recent arrivals in the Nass valley (Barbeau 1950:27-29). People of the Wolf and Eagle crests consider themselves to be immigrants from the Haida, Tlingit, and Tahltan (an interior Athapaskan people). These two crests are

linked as allies and commonly intermarry (Halpin 1973:62-63).

The Nishga were famous as aggressive traders and merchants. Their chiefs took the initiative in securing and maintaining the flow of trade goods and exercised control over innovations in the culture as well as over selective borrowing during contact with Europeans--all of which were important aspects of the later missionary phase of Nishga history. Among the late nineteenth century Tlingit, Wolf chiefs who illustrated this leadership role were Shakes (a Stikine from Fort Wrangell), Toyaatt (also from Fort Wrangell and one of the first Christian converts there), and Shotridge (a Chilkat from Klukwan). These men may be compared to Kinsada, Kadounaha, Claytha, Qwockshow, and Skoten among the Nishga in the last decades of the nineteenth century in their exertion of social, economic, ceremonial, political, and religious leadership. At Kuiu, Alaska, the Tlingit Wolf crest people were called "People of the Nass," further evidence of Nishga-Tlingit Wolf crest links (Swanton 1970:399). Tlingit legends state that several Tlingit Wolf and Raven clans were derived from the Tsimshian area (Swanton 1970:414). This agreed with traditional Tlingit and Tsimshian views that the Tlingit moved north as the Tsimshian expanded to the coast and then northward (Swanton 1970:476).

Tsimshian oral history tells of a migration from the interior village of Temlaham, homeland of the Tsimshian, and also from Tahltan. The latter group were members of the Wolf crest. Other Tsimshian are said to be derived from the Tlingit and Kwakiutl. Still another Nishga tradition tells of an Eagle crest clan of Tlingit origin which moved from Prince of Wales Island to the Nass River and assimilated with the Nishga (Drucker 1955:114). These were movements of small groups whose history has been merged with that of the general population.

Nishga tradition tells of a pre-flood era when they occupied a site about twenty miles from the site of the village of Gitlakdamiks. The people camped on the highest mountain nearby and waited for the flood to recede. Some Tlingit, fleeing the inundation, stayed on with the Nishga (Shotridge 1919:55ff.).

Following the eruption of a volcano in the upper Nass River in approximately 1770, two villages were founded and were named Gitlakdamiks and Gitwinsilth. According to tradition, prior to the volcanic eruption, the Nishga in the upper Nass valley had resided in one village. The eruption, which was regarded as divine punishment for the mistreatment of salmon by children, changed the course of the river and created a vast lava bed on the broad floor of the upper valley (Collison 1915:270-271; Barbeau 1950:28-29).

The Nass River takes its name from a Tlingit word meaning "stomach" or "food depot," a reference to its rich supply of food,

especially at its mouth or estuary which empties into Observatory Inlet (Walbran 1972:352; Binns 1967:245). This explanation was given by Captain Aemilius Simpson to Peter Skene Ogden, both officers in the Hudson's Bay Company at the time of the founding of the Company post at the mouth of the Nass River in 1831. Of these resources, the most important for both food and trade were eulachon (candlefish) and eulachon oil. These commodities were in demand by the Nishga and their neighbors on both the islands and on the mainland. Catching and processing eulachon was a major annual economic and social event. Surrounding peoples came to the fishery at the mouth of the Nass River (the Red Bluff area) each spring. Trade routes with interior hunting peoples (e.g., the "grease trail") carried fish, oil, and other trade items from the coast to exchange for hides, horn, and meat with people from the interior. Since these trading arrangements predated the the European fur trade, the latter may be said to have grafted itself onto the former.

A first fruits ceremony marked the spring arrival of the first run of eulachon, which was sometimes called the "savior" fish for its timeliness in providing a replenishment of food after the depletion of stores through the winter months. By March, people were living on dried berries and seaweed flavored with last year's eulachon oil. The people gathered at the fishery and called out to the fish, "You are all chiefs," to salute and honor their arrival. The eulachon were the first fish to return and were followed by others. Killer whales, porpoises, sea lions, seals, and sea birds were attracted to the area by the abundance of food. Shellfish were also available. In the spring before the snow was off the ground, people began to arrive at the fishery from up river on the Nass and the upper Skeena Rivers. The coastal Tsimshian also came, and canoes arrived from the Queen Charlotte Islands and Prince of Wales Island carrying Haidas. The Haida were trading partners and occasional enemies of the Nishga. Haida canoes were traded, and children and slaves were sometimes sold at this annual spring trade mart (Binns 1967:246ff.).

NISHGA CONTACT WITH EUROPEANS IN THE MARITIME TRADE PERIOD

By the early eighteenth century, the arrival of Russian trade goods to the north Pacific coast resulted in "widespread destabilization." Haida, Tlingit, and Tsimshian shifted northward in an effort to gain greater access to new trade goods from Siberia. Conflict resulted from one group pressing against another. Interior peoples such as the Chilcotin, Carrier, and Tsetsaut were also drawn into this "struggle over trade." Control of forts and trade routes were crucial to trade success, although contests over forts and trade routes were not primarily over territory as such (MacDonald 1984:79-80).

The earliest Nishga contact with European trade goods probably occurred through the Tlingit who traded and fought with Russian traders entering their territory by the mid-eighteenth century. The Tlingit were active traders at Sitka, Alaska, and were linked to people along the Nass River. By the 1780s, the Haida may also have initiated indirect contact with European trade goods, as they were a major trading partner of the Nishga and Coast Tsimshian, and continued to have this relationship with the Nishga and Coast Tsimshian into the nineteenth century. Haida, Tlingit, and Tsimshian recognized kinship with each other, and were often bilingual (Kraus 1956:209-214).

By the last quarter of the eighteenth century, ships from Russia, Spain, Britain, and the United States came to the Northwest Coast to explore and trade. By the 1780s, trade in sea otter pelts had become profitable, and ships arrived in late spring and summer to exchange manufactured goods (especially metal products) for sea otter pelts. In addition to a wide variety of Europeans who manned these ships, Chinese, Polynesians, Blacks, and North American Indians, including Iroquois and Mexican Indians, came to the Northwest Coast (Quimby 1945:250-251).

The Europeans introduced epidemic diseases for which the Northwest Coast Indians had neither efficacious indigenous medicine nor immunity. By the 1770s, smallpox had spread among the Tlingit and to their neighbors, including the Nishga. Jonathan S. Green, an American missionary visiting the mouth of the Nass River in 1829, reported that elderly informants told of an epidemic many years earlier (Green 1915:39ff., 64). Other factors linked to the European fur trade also contributed to a population decline, including accelerated intertribal warfare and excessive use of alcohol.

The Haida grew potatoes, and by the late 1780s were trading potatoes to European ships (Van der Brink 1974:34). In 1787, Captain George Dixon traded in Tsimshian waters and northward (Gough 1980:70). Captain Charles Duncan of the *Princess Royal* traded with Tsimshian at the mouth of the Skeena River in 1788. The Nishga were probably introduced to European foods by the late eighteenth century.

The Nishga met Captain George Vancouver in July, 1793 during his first voyage to the Northwest Coast in search of a northwest passage. Vancouver had been told of an "extensive inland navigation" by Captain William Brown, whom he met while in the area. This place, Brown had been told, was called Ewen Naas (large food depot). Though Vancouver traveled near the mouth of the Nass River, he did not find the mouth, and his expedition also failed to locate the mouth of the Skeena River. Vancouver's expedition met Indians in the waters of Alice Arm, Hastings Arm, Observatory

Inlet, and the southern end of Portland Canal. In the late nineteenth century, sites were claimed by Nishga chiefs at various places in these areas, and today all of these areas have Nishga reserves. The Nishga hold that these have been their territories from time immemorial. Tongass Tlingit lived at the mouth of Portland Canal, and some of the other Indians encountered by Captain Vancouver and his crew may also have been Tlingit.

Generally, the Indians whom Vancouver met were at first cautious and probing, but became more friendly after the initial meeting. Vancouver suspected their reticence may have been a result of Brown having fired on people in the Port Essington area with "resultant slaughter." Such an incident would have been quickly reported to neighboring peoples.

Although the pelts offered to Vancouver by the Nishga were not of high quality, trading did occur and the Indians were especially interested in acquiring blue cloth. In the previous year, the Spanish navigator, Caamano, met a Tsimshian chief who was dressed in blue calico with a floral pattern (Gunther 1972:107-108).

The only serious hostility on record took place in the Tlingit waters of Behm Canal, Alaska. During this clash, a man identified as a leader donned a mask representing a Wolf (Gunther 1972:166).

Although Captain Vancouver was invited twice by Indians, presumably Nishgas, to visit their settlements, he refused on grounds of the urgency of his main business, exploration. Thus, no occupied native villages were seen or visited in these Nishga waters. Perhaps the Indians interpreted this refusal to visit as a sign of unfriendliness or fear of attack. It is likely that they understood Vancouver's ships were not primarily interested in trading. Whether the settlements to which Vancouver was invited were temporary encampments or permanent winter villages is not clear. However, it is likely they were the former since the Nishga have traditionally and historically maintained permanent settlements on the Nass River at some distance from their far-flung fishing stations.

The first group of Nishga to contact Vancouver did so on Observatory Inlet on July 22, 1793. These people were unable or unwilling to help Vancouver locate Ewen Naas, the "extensive inland navigation" about which he had been told, and which he hoped would lead to a northwest passage. Another group sold salmon to Vancouver in exchange for mirrors and other items. On July 24, 1793, a larger party of Indians contacted Vancouver on Alice Arm. At first they were cautious about approaching the Europeans, but the atmosphere improved after an exchange of gifts. The Indian men were armed with iron daggers--an indication of direct or indirect contact--which were hung in leather sheaths from

their necks and wrists. The leaders of the party dined with Vancouver and his officers, and although each side was unfamiliar with the other's language, some communication took place through gestures and Haida words, including the first invitation to a village.

Three days later, on July 27, 1793 on Portland Canal, a party of fifteen Indians encountered Vancouver. Again, the initial contact was cautious and tentative. The men's faces were painted red, white, and black, which gave them a ferocious and horrifying appearance as far as Vancouver and his crew were concerned. This confirmed Vancouver's former opinion that these were an unusually warlike people. Vancouver also commented negatively on the appearance of a high ranking woman due to her lip labret.

Although Captain Vancouver's initial effort at friendly contact was spurned at the instigation of the party's leader, a warmer interchange was created when trade items, which were at first rejected, were accepted. Vancouver then declined a second invitation to visit their village. As trading proceeded, the encounter became still more friendly. "They began a song that continued until they came close to us, when I observed that their arms and war garments were all laid aside . . ." Like the other Indians, these men had iron daggers around their necks and their spears had iron or bone points. They wore breastplates of hide in several thicknesses with wooden slats. This suggests that they were on an expedition in which they anticipated hostility from some quarter.

Again on July 31, 1793, three Indians met Vancouver early in the day. Later, they reappeared with others and trading ensued. Vancouver and his crew were suspicious of attack, and refused to trade requested firearms and ammunition. Finally, the Indians departed issuing what Vancouver took to be insults. On this occasion, a woman was the leader of the party and the disposition of spears in the canoe for defence or attack was noted (Vancouver 1967(2):338-339).

All of these contacts create an impression of a people who were suspicious of Europeans and on their guard to defend themselves. They were willing to trade, but less so than others on the coast, and they offered only poor or mediocre pelts. These summer contacts did not reveal much about the life of the Indians or their culture. Vancouver nevertheless indicated that they were somehow different in demeanor and spirit from the other Indians he encountered.

These people, arguably Nishga, met the Europeans as potential traders or potential attackers and were prepared to respond accordingly. Directly or indirectly, they had a knowledge of trading with non-Indians. Probably further cultural traits are illustrated by

these contacts, especially those involving the etiquette of trading and raiding. Captain James Colnett met Tsimshian Indians in 1788 and noted that they were not accustomed to the maritime fur trade, and that contact with them was not satisfactory (Gunther 1972:92). Perhaps the same can be said of Vancouver's encounters with the Nishga in 1793.

Nishga-European contact became more frequent during the decades at the turn of the nineteenth century. In 1799, Russian traders established a trading post at Sitka, Alaska, and the post was reestablished in 1804 after suppression of a Tlingit uprising in the area. The Sitkans had firearms acquired from American traders. Some became trading partners of the Russians, but others resisted what they may have perceived as a threat to their trading position (Tollefson 1976:258). Lisiansky, who participated in the retaking of Sitka, observed that "rich" families among the Sitka Tlingit used metal household utensils (1814:243). In 1832, Sitka became the capital of Russian Alaska. Russian orthodox clergy were already present prior to that date, and the bishop's see or headquarters was established there in 1834.

Jonathan Green, a missionary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in Hawaii, toured the Northwest Coast in 1829 to assess its potential for American missionaries. The impressions he gained were probably influenced by conversations with two Russian clergy at Sitka. One of these clergy, a veteran of twelve years, told him that prospects for converting the Indians were not good. Green then reported that the time was not ripe for evangelizing. He also made several observations about the Nishga in particular, whom he visited once in early April and again in late May 1829, almost certainly at their fishery at the mouth of the Nass River. The Nishga were traders with interior Indians and had monopolized the coastal trade of these people because of superior weaponry. There were about 5,500 Nishga, although reports indicated that their population had been larger. Smallpox ("Tom Dyer" disease), war, intemperance, and infanticide were the reasons given by Green for this decrease in population. Green found the Nishga language (a Penutian language) "harsh and disagreeable"; the trade language they used was "Skidegate Haida" (presumably an Athapaskan language). On visiting the site of the Nass River fishery in April 1829, Green noted that the Hudson's Bay Company planned to build a post there (1915:61-62).

In general, Green's remarks suggest that he spent most of his time at the fishery rather than at any of the winter villages, although he made a few observations about Nishga material and social culture which would imply at least one or two visits. "They occasionally build a decent home, and erect before it a mast or log of wood of great size carved and painted fantastically." The completion of a house was celebrated with a great feast and gift

giving which bestowed honor on the giver. The Nishga took most of their slaves from more southerly peoples. They grew potatoes to sell to visiting ships. Green commented that in 1828, ships had left pigs so that the Nishga might also start raising them to sell to non-Indians (1915:51). Green believed that in most ways, non-Indian influence was "about 100% harmful," an opinion which was passed on to him by Captain Aemilius Simpson of the Hudson's Bay Company. The Nishga, Green concluded, were a powerful tribe, intelligent, fierce, and warlike. Green held some conversations with Nishga chiefs through Tlingit interpreters, and from the Tlingit gained some knowledge of the Nishga concept of God and reincarnation (1915:63ff.).

Green's comments regarding his second visit in May 1829 were briefer than his earlier ones, and stressed the aggressive trading traits attributed to the Nishga. "Here is a people," he wrote, "whom I would recommend to the attention of those who talk of the efficiency of moral lectures to subdue the obduracy of the heart" (1915:80). He noted Nishga pride, and shed light on Nishga-Haida rivalry, noting that the Nishga had acquired firearms from traders and used their military technology against the Kaigani Haida with deadly effect. Oral tradition, gathered in the late nineteenth century, also tells of war between Nishga and Tsimshian in the early nineteenth century. This was resolved by appointing champions from the two camps. Such restrained conflict may have reflected the closer ties which existed between the Nishga and Tsimshian, and the desire for more peaceful mechanisms to deal with friction.

By the 1820s and 1830s, European religious influences were probably beginning to be felt among the Nishga. Christian missionary influences penetrated perhaps from Alaska, and certainly from the interior. The Reverend Innokenti Veniaminoff, a Russian Orthodox priest who later became a bishop, took up residence at Sitka in the mid-1830s from 1834 to 1838. Later, a school and seminary were opened there. Veniaminoff knew of the Nishga, but only of the Wolf crest. This may be a reflection of the role of the Nishga as traders and merchants and their links to the Tlingit (Kraus 1956:75).

Meanwhile, Roman Catholic missionaries penetrating from the east were evangelizing as far west as the plateau area. This mission influence resulted in the career of the prophet Beni (Pene), a Carrier Indian from the Bulkley River who was active from about the 1820s to the late nineteenth century. Beni's teachings spread among the plateau peoples and on to the coastal peoples and the Queen Charlotte Islands. The Tsimshian and Nishga were influenced as his ideas spread down the Skeena and Nass Rivers. From the Nishga and the Tsimshian, this influence spread north to the Tlingit and southward to the Kwakiutl (Spier 1935:39; Jenness

1943:551-559).

Beni taught the coming of a new world order, when slaves would become chiefs and chiefs would become common men (McCullagh n.d.:20). He instituted a ceremonial ritual based on a synthesis of Indian and Roman Catholic liturgical forms. William Henry Collison, an Anglican missionary on the Nass River from 1884 to 1920, described a performance of the ritual singing, dancing, and gesturing (including the sign of the cross) as performed for him by a very old Nishga man. As will be seen below, several missionaries to the Nishga thought that the Beni movement had prepared the way for their coming.

Through direct or indirect contact between the Nishga and Indian and European traders and missionaries, there arose a conjunction of cultural influences which was often conducive to change. It may be that an atmosphere of anticipation of change was characteristic of a trading people like the Nishga. In that case, developments during the second quarter of the nineteenth century would have reinforced and heightened these preexisting conditions (Barnett 1953:47ff.).

EUROPEANS AT THEIR DOORSTEP: FORT NASS (SIMPSON)

In the early nineteenth century, an end of the maritime fur trade in the Northwest Coast followed the depletion of commercially significant quantities of sea otter pelts. The new fur trade era was based on trading posts (forts) built on both the mainland and on Vancouver Island for greater efficiency in promoting trade. The French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1790s-1815) had hurt British fur trading and given an advantage to American traders. American and British traders sold guns, ammunition, and alcohol to coastal Indians. After 1799, these goods were preferred over those of the Russians in Sitka. The amalgamation of the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company in 1821 placed the Hudson's Bay Company in a strong position to compete more effectively against American and Russian traders. Among other factors, the suitability of trading sites was based on access to the interior and on indications from previous contacts that trading prospects were good.

Information about Indian customs gained during the maritime fur trade period from the 1780s to the 1820s probably told of annual gatherings of thousands of people at the fishery at the mouth of the Nass River. Mid-nineteenth century estimates indicated that each spring, as many as 5,000 people gathered at this site, making it an attractive market for European traders. European awareness of indigenous trade in the area would have enhanced the locality's potential for an expanded trade based on European goods

and European control. The mouth of the Nass River seemed to be an ideal site. Dr. John McLoughlin, Hudson's Bay Company chief at Fort Vancouver, who was formerly of the North West Company and was appointed to take charge of the Columbia Department of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1823, wrote to London in October 1825 informing his superiors that more inland furs were traded at the Nass than at any other place on the coast. McLoughlin also proposed to explore the best river route to the coast with the help of interior Indians.

Based on their superior technology and cultural prestige enjoyed by the northern coastal tribes, Nishga and Coastal Tsimshian engaged in lively trade with the interior peoples adjacent to them. In the early nineteenth century, the Tsimshian and Nishga competed successfully against European traders coming overland from the east by controlling the access of hinterland tribes to the coast. By 1830, plans were underway for a fort on the Nass River which was presumed to be a gateway to the interior. This new fort was to be named Fort Nass; later its name was changed to Fort Simpson and it was moved to a second site.[1]

In the mid-1830s, Dr. John McLoughlin began collecting supplies for Fort Nass. On July 8, 1830, three ships left Fort Vancouver for the Nass River to choose a site for the new fort. This trading expedition was also intended to be large enough for defense in case the Nishga were hostile. Traditional notions of Nishga hostility and large numbers had been established by the 1830s. The Nishga were reluctant to give Captain Aemilius Simpson of the expedition information about the area, presumably anticipating a threat to their trade monopoly and their desire to make the best bargain with Europeans. They also succeeded in getting more supplies from Simpson than he had intended to give them for their skins. Simpson may have hoped to set the initial relations between the two peoples on a good footing, and thought this was worth the extra expense. The Nishga had very specific ideas about preferred trade items: ammunition, blankets, and alcohol. Trade in the latter item was justified as necessary to make the English-owned Hudson's Bay Company competitive with American traders (Rich 1941:312). Although ignorance of the Nishga language probably impeded ease of contact, trading may have been carried out by using Chinook jargon, as well as some Haida and Tlingit.

In his orders to found Fort Nass, Hudsons's Bay Company officer Peter Skene Ogden was told what was by now the conventional wisdom about the Nishga: they were "numerous and especially hostile." A delay in starting the fort occurred due to a high rate of illness among Hudson's Bay Company personnel. In May 1831, Ogden entered the Nass estuary and noted that the waters "boiled silver" with eulachon (Binns 1967:241). Despite warnings

about Nishga hostility, Ogden found them to be reasonable and friendly. They were not armed and had furs to trade. Ogden chose the east end of Fishery Bay as the fort site, and clearing began in the summer of 1831. Buildings included a dining hall, a workshop, and a store; a stockade was also erected. According to oral tradition, the location of Fort Nass was near the cemetery of the modern village of Kincolith (Collison 1915:272). Though Governor George Simpson had urged their cultivation, the ground was found to be unsuitable for growing potatoes.

Shortly after the completion of Fort Nass, Captain Aemilius Simpson died and was buried there. Ogden subsequently renamed this post Fort Simpson. When the post was relocated to the present site of Fort Simpson, British Columbia, three years later in 1834, Simpson's remains were disinterred and reburied at this second site for Fort Simpson. In the mid-nineteenth century, the Nass River was also known as Simpson River.

The last major battle between Tsimshian and Haida was said to have taken place in 1831, and it is likely that these Tsimshian were actually Nishga. Fighting broke out when a Haida woman struck a high status Tsimshian woman in the face with a fish while engaged in trading. Tradition tells us that the two were arguing over the relative merits of the two major trading commodities of their respective peoples, halibut for the Haida and eulachon oil for the Tsimshian-Nishga (Codere 1972:105-106). Peaceful relations between these two major trading peoples of the Northwest Coast greatly aided the pursuit of trading by both Indians and non-Indians.

Some indication of Indian/non-Indian relations at the first and second sites of Fort Simpson may be gained from information about two officers of the Hudson's Bay Company who were stationed there. Dr. John Frederick Kennedy served as a physician at Fort Nass (the first name and site of Fort Simpson) from 1831 to 1832. Educated in Scotland and with a medical degree from the University of Edinburgh, Kennedy served as a surgeon and physician in the area for many years and married the daughter of Chief Legaic of the Coast Tsimshian. Since the Legaics were dominant figures in the fur trade for several generations in the nineteenth century (Robinson 1978:61-87), Kennedy's marriage would have constituted an important commercial and diplomatic alliance for both Indians and Europeans. Kennedy retired from the Company in 1845 and died in 1859 (Rich 1941:346; Dee 1945:71). Another mid-nineteenth century member of the Hudson's Bay Company staff at the new Fort Simpson was Captain William McNeill, who married Neshaki, the daughter of a Nishga chief and an outstanding trader in her own right in the 1850s (see below). This marriage can also be interpreted as having diplomatic significance.

When Fort Nass was constructed, Nishga people immediately began to build houses in the vicinity (Binns 1967:243; Large, ed. 1963:283). Several Nishga, including Chief Caxetan, Red Shirt, and Jones were in close contact with the fort. Another man, Conguele, is also mentioned (Large, ed. 1963:291). Although later contact with Conguele and Jones at the new Fort Simpson was reported by fort officers, and their information suggests that Conguele (Coaguele) was in fact a Haida chief, little else is known about these figures. It is likely that all Nishga in close contact with the fort were drawn from the two Nishga tribes of the lower Nass River, and that all of these were chiefs since Nishga leaders dominated the fur trade and controlled the economic life of their people.

In September 1832, Donald Manson traveled with Chief Caxetan up the Nass River for the Hudson's Bay Company. Despite commonplace descriptions of the Nishga as hostile, Manson was greeted with cordiality throughout his trip. Caxetan's village was his first stop, and Manson estimated it to be about twenty-five kilometers above Fort Nass, which would place it in the vicinity of Gitiks or Lakkalsap (Greenville). Manson continued on upriver, passing a few houses along the way. A second village of twenty to thirty houses also warmly received him, causing him to call it the "friendly" village. The friendly village was a principal fishing place, and a chief of this village accompanied Manson on the next leg of his voyage. Manson then proceeded on to where the Nass River narrowed and flowed through a canyon with banks which were steep and rocky, but not high. During this part of his trip, he passed eight empty villages and was told that their inhabitants were hunting groundhogs in the mountains and would not return before November. Above the canyon, he stopped at one more village which contained about twenty houses. He then reversed his course and returned to the friendly village, then to Caxetan's village, and finally to Fort Nass. Throughout his trip, he reported that he met with a hospitable reception. Later that autumn, Manson visited other peoples to encourage trade (Manson 1832). This may be the earliest description of the Nass River Valley and its sequence of village sites.

The location for the original Fort Nass proved to be a disappointment to the Hudson's Bay Company, even though it drew Indians from the surrounding area. By mid-1833, plans were afoot for another fort on the Stikine River or Dundas Island (Rich 1941:111). After only three years at its first site, Fort Nass, now renamed Fort Simpson, was relocated about sixty kilometers to the southwest. A variety of reasons were given for dissatisfaction with the original site, including an inadequate supply of fresh water, lack of a harbor which made it difficult to receive ocean-going vessels, exposure to winds, the severity of winter, nearby Russian opposition, and distance from the open sea.

Two other explanations for dissatisfaction with original site for Fort Simpson require a bit more examination. Nishga hostility, which was much talked about and anticipated, did not occur even though it was also cited as a reason for removal. Apparently, relations with the Nishga were quite amicable and peaceful. One indication of this is Nishga settlement at the fort. Another explanation for the fort's relocation is suggested by the marriage of Dr. John Frederick Kennedy to Legaic's daughter. This explanation states that relocation of the fort is attributed to the influence of Chief Legaic on Dr. Kennedy. If the fort were relocated in the territory of the people for whom Legaic was a leading chief and a major trader, his influence and authority would have been more effectively at the disposal of the Hudson's Bay Company. Thus, the interests of both the Company and the Tsimshian would be jointly served.

The Nass River proved to be much less useful for access to the interior than was hoped. The Skeena River, which was nearer to the new site of Fort Simpson, would give better access to the interior because it was navigable for more than twice the distance of the Nass River. The Skeena River had also been an established trade route since precontact times. The new site for Fort Simpson on the Tsimshian Peninsula had a natural harbor and was close to a large population of Coast Tsimshian. Many of these people settled at the relocated site for Fort Simpson after 1834.

Although relations between the Nishga and non-Indians at Fort Nass/Fort Simpson had been friendly, minor violence did erupt on the last day the buildings were being dismantled in 1834. Prior to this, no sign of distress at the fort's departure had occurred. However, on the last day, twenty-five gallons of rum were provided with the result that there was much excitement and noise which lasted through the night. Although Chiefs Caxetan and Jones remained friendly and cooperative, some Indians used physical force to interfere with the process of moving portions of the dismantled fort to the waiting ship. After the non-Indians left, the Nishga searched the remains of the fort for abandoned items, especially metal objects and iron nails. These were removed and kept for future use (Binns 1967:265-268). Alarmed by all the disruptions, Kennedy held Jones and Conguele as hostages to ensure a safe withdrawal from the fort (Large, ed. 1963:291).

Three years of close contact with Fort Nass/Fort Simpson intensified Nishga use of European goods, increased the chances for transmitting European diseases, enlarged the possibility of racial admixture, and catered to the trading inclinations of the Nishga.

The presence of Fort Nass/Fort Simpson probably contributed to the spread of disease and caused a decline in the Nishga population, though this may have been offset somewhat by taking

in neighboring peoples. The fort, its personnel, and the Nishga who settled there led to more intense use of local resources. Competition among the Nishga, Tsimshian, Haida, Tlingit, and others was heightened by the quest for goods to trade to Europeans. More potlatching and competition for status probably resulted from this. Haida trade was channeled through Fort Nass/Fort Simpson, thus giving the Nishga a role in this trade. Since British goods were often preferred, some Tlingit trade was also directed through the fort.

Although Fort Nass/Fort Simpson was removed in 1834, regular and direct contact with the fort by Indian people in the area did not cease, although it was made more difficult by the fort's removal. Travel by canoe along the coast was common in aboriginal trade and communication. Fort Simpsons's new location was in the homeland of the the Coastal Tsimshian who were neighbors, trading partners, and cultural cousins of the Nishga. The same people who had gathered at Fishery Bay at the mouth of the Nass River each spring continued to do so, and then regathered at the new Fort Simpson in the summer and early autumn to trade. Although the social and commercial elements of the fort had a new location, the participants were the same as in the previous location. Relocation of the fort called for continued initiative by the Nishga. After several decades of trading, they had become accustomed to trade goods and would have been unwilling or even unable to do without them, especially guns, ammunition, and textiles.

PATTERNS OF NISHGA TRADE WITH THE NEW FORT SIMPSON

In his *History of the Oregon Territory and British North American Fur Trade* (1844), John Dunn, a Hudson's Bay Company employee at the new Fort Simpson in September 1834, observed that in addition to Tsimshian, there were Nishga, Haida, Kaigani (Haida of Prince of Wales Island), and several Tlingit tribes from Alaska, including Tongass and Stikine, at the new Fort Simpson. Entire families came to the new fort. Dunn noted that the Nishga, Haida, and Tlingit dressed alike, another indication of the close cultural similarities between these three northern peoples of the Northwest Coast culture area. The Nishga sold furs, fish, and fish oil and received blankets and other commodities in return. They also engaged in slave trading with interior tribes (Dunn 1844:283-284). In March and April, 1835, parties of Nishga also came to trade at Fort McLoughlin, a Hudson's Bay Company post founded at Bella Bella in 1833 and named for Dr. John McLoughlin. In April, one of these groups included a high ranking woman whose physical appearance due to a labret caused special comment by William Fraser Tolmie (Large, ed. 1963:308). As we have seen, chiefs, including females, were the economic, social, cultural, and political leaders of Nishga society. The various functions of their leadership

were interrelated and inseparable. By this means, controlled change could take place in contact with the Europeans. The principal chief at Fort Simpson at this time (the mid-1830s) was Legaic, father-in-law of Dr. Joseph Frederick Kennedy (Dunn 1844:282).

Hudson's Bay Company ships also continued to visit the mouth of the Nass River to trade. In the spring of 1835, John Work traded at the former site of Fort Nass before settling in as officer in charge of the new Fort Simpson. Tough bargaining ensued because of American competition there. Since the Nishga preferred American goods, Work was obliged to raise his payments to compete and this price war was to the advantage of the Nishga. Americans attempted to improve their own competitive advantage by engaging in a coastal trade in eulachon grease (Dee 1945:43).

Some of the people gathered at the new Fort Simpson were racially mixed, with red hair and fair complexions from American and Russian fathers. A few Indians knew a little English which they had picked up from American sailors. Children of mixed marriages and liaisons would, if left with their mother's people as they usually were, be accepted into her family. Among the matrilineal Nishga and Tsimshian, children became members of their mother's crest. Mixed-race children of chiefly families might assume leadership positions in their communities when they became adults, and perhaps aid friendly contacts with Europeans and European culture. The Reverend William Henry Pierce, a Methodist clergyman and missionary, and Chief Alfred Dudoward of Fort Simpson, a sometime Methodist lay missionary, were examples of this kind of leadership in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

After contact with Europeans, the annual early-autumn trading expeditions of the Haida were based on the potato. Tsimshian villages were the main purchasers of this food and were the sites of these annual "potato fairs." Some of the canoes of the forty to fifty-ship Haida potato fleets were also sold. This shift to potatoes as the staple of trade was linked to the sharp decline of the sea-otter, and the consequent decline of the fortunes of the Massett, Skidegate, Cumshewa, and other Haida communities. The great wealth created in these communities by the sea-otter facilitated the purchase of blankets, which became the standard of wealth. By the 1830s, potatoes were the means to acquire blankets through mainland tribes such as the Tsimshian and Nishga, who had in turn purchased blankets with furs (especially beaver pelts) which were traded to British and American traders. The Tsimshian and Nishga were themselves intermediaries with the interior tribes from whom the pelts came. The Nishga chief, Jones, arrived at Fort Simpson in the Spring of 1835. While there, he and his followers fought some Kaigani Haida, but were defeated and returned home (Dee 1945:31ff.).

In canoes purchased from the Haida with fish oil, the Nishga visited Fort Simpson, bringing potatoes which they had also previously acquired from the Haida. Salmon was another trade item. Sometimes the Nishga traded with local Tsimshian, ignoring the Hudson's Bay Company fort because the prices were not satisfactory and American traders were anticipated. Higher prices for pelts drew other Indians to the fort, including Stikine and Tongass Tlingit.

The most complete source of information on Nishga/non-Indian contact is the Fort Simpson journal of the Hudson's Bay Company, which contains a description of all visitations and trading that took place. From this can be constructed an outline of relations between the Nishga and Europeans (Hudson's Bay Company Archives 1832-40, 1855-1859).

The Nishga developed a pattern of trading at the new Fort Simpson in the early years of its founding. Trading was heaviest from April to early autumn. The spring trade consisted especially of eulachon ("smallfish" or "candlefish"), as well as eulachon oil or grease, and furs. The summer trade was predominantly in pelts supplemented by salmon, oil, and other fish. Some trading with the fort continued throughout the year. The bulk of the fur trade occurred in the period April to September or October. Occasionally, the fort journal mentions a Nishga trader by name. One of these traders was Chief Caxetan (Coksawtan), who had been active in trading with Fort Nass (the first Fort Simpson). Chief Caxetan came from a village on the lower Nass River. Other traders who were mentioned, especially by the end of the first decade at the new Fort Simpson, were an individual named Ross's Friend who was later identified by the Nishga name, Skotten, and another person named Ishateen.

In 1836-1837, the early pattern of trading was interrupted by a severe smallpox epidemic which caused a reduction in direct contact with the fort. This was not the first such epidemic. The American missionary, Jonathan Green, was told of an earlier epidemic when he visited the mouth of the Nass River in 1829. The epidemic of 1836-1837 raged along the Nass River, spreading from lower to upper villages, and on to the people of the interior. In September 1837, the news at Fort Simpson was that "considerable numbers" of Nishga had died and were dying. Although the epidemic contributed to a reluctance to visit the fort, a few Nishga traders reached the fort in August and September of 1837. By the spring of 1838, trade was increasing. The main commodities brought by the Nishga were beaver, bear, marten, lynx, and land otter pelts. Eulachon, eulachon oil, and fish, especially salmon, continued to be trading staples.

Many of the furs, oil, and fish traded by the Tsimshian, Haida, and others also came from the Nass River. This was

especially true during the spring when the mouth of the river became a major fishery and trade mart for north Pacific Coast peoples, including Tlingit, northern Kwakiutl, and people from the interior.

Another pattern which developed by the early 1840s was the Nishga custom of coming in small numbers. Trading parties generally consisted of one, two, or three canoes. Nishga traders usually arrived on one day, traded the next day, and left on the third day. They sometimes refrained from trading everything at once and traded the balance of their goods on the third day before returning home. Another Nishga trading pattern which was frequently noted in the Fort Simpson journal was the retention of some pelts to sell to the American ships which visited Nishga waters in the summer months. Although the Hudson's Bay Company was annoyed by American competition, and themselves sent ships to the Nass to compete, the Nishga persisted in this practice. In such circumstances, the Hudson's Bay Company tried to undersell the Americans, restoring lower prices for Nishga pelts once the Americans departed. Throughout all of this, the Nishga gained a reputation for being tough bargainers.

The Nishga also sometimes conducted forays against the Fort Simpson vegetable garden and were threatened with being shot on sight. After at least one such incident, they remained away from the fort for several weeks.

During the period from the late 1830s to the mid-1850s, the most frequently named Nishga trader was "Ross's Friend" or Skotten as he was later called.[2] Throughout the 1850s, pelts and seafood continued to be the main trade items.

In the 1850s, there was a substantial trade in pelts by a particularly outstanding Nishga trader which the Fort Simpson journal called Neshaki (Mrs. Martha McNeill). Neshaki was a highborn daughter of a Nishga chief and the second wife of Captain William H. McNeill, commandant at Fort Simpson for most of the decade from 1851-1859, and again from 1861-1863. She seems to have risen to trading prominence during her husband's tenure as the fort commandant. Neshaki was apparently able to use her prestige and rank on the Nass River to gain large supplies of beaver, bear, marten, lynx, and other pelts. She became a wealthy trader and continued to trade even after her husband retired to Victoria. Her step-daughter, Mrs. Lucy McNeill Moffett, sometimes accompanied her on trading trips to the Nass. Mrs. Moffett was the wife of Hamilton Moffett, McNeill's successor as head of Fort Simpson from 1859 to 1861, and again from 1863 to 1866.

Although the Nishga were consistently active in the trade at Fort Simpson from the time of its founding, they were not as

prominent as the Tsimshian, Haida, and Tlingit (particularly Stikine and Tongass Tlingit). While Tsimshian and Haida canoes came and went by the scores, Nishga canoes came a few at a time, although in the 1850s there was an increase in Nishga trading, perhaps due primarily to Neshaki (Mrs. Martha McNeill). By 1857, another Nishga trader named Chief Kilzarden (Killsarder, Kinsada) began to be mentioned.3

Compared to the Tsimshain and Haida, the smaller numbers of Nishga traders and quantities of goods traded may, in part, have resulted from alternative Nishga sources for trade. The Nishga had ready access to trade through Tsimshian, Haida, Tlingit, and interior peoples, and had probably carried on this trade for an extensive period prior to contact with Europeans, perhaps for centuries. The wide Nishga choice of trading partners may have had the effect of moderating the necessity or desirability of more extensive direct contact with Fort Simpson. Like their Indian trading partners, the Americans also came directly to the Nishga, as did Hudson's Bay Company ships.

The importance of the Nass fishery as an Indian food source and trading center cannot be overlooked as a factor in shaping Nishga trading activity. The impression of many Nishga neighbors and the newly arrived Europeans that the Nishga were the center of economic activities was not completely altered by the relocation of Fort Simpson. Even more important to the Nishga than any changes which might have been occurring was the element of continuity.

While traveling south to fish, trade, hunt, and attend ceremonies, the Nishga stopped at Fort Simpson to visit, and sometimes engaged in a small amount of trading. Occasionally, Hudson's Bay Company records mention trading between Indians at Fort Simpson and ceremonial activities there. A large settlement of Tsimshian had grown up around the fort during the two decades after its relocation. In mid-June 1857, two canoes of Nishga were recorded as having arrived for a "feast."

Until late April 1840, the Nishga were usually identified in the Fort Simpson Journal as Nass people, Nass traders, or Nass canoes. After that date, they were sometimes called "Nascars," suggesting improved knowledge at the fort. The Fort Simpson journal carefully distinguished between "Nass canoes" (canoes bearing Nishgas) and "canoes coming from the Nass"; that is, Tsimshian, Haida, or Tlingit traders who had arrived from the mouth of the Nass River.

Nishga trade at Fort Simpson stemmed largely from the lower Nass River villages. The first mention of upriver traders was in early April, 1840. These upriver people traded beaver, marten, and lynx pelts, as well as fish. Pelts from the upper Nass River were especially prized by the Hudson's Bay Company (Meilleur 1980:117).

By the 1850s, rice and molasses were important trade commodities. The Nishga had developed a taste for this combination, and were reported to be "mad" for rice and willing to buy as much as was for sale.

Nishga visiting Fort Simpson were involved in the increased amount of violence reported in the fort journal. The introduction of quantities of alcohol from Victoria, from ships, and elsewhere may have contributed to this condition. Rivalries for trade and resources such as competition among various Tsimshian or Haida played a part in intertribal conflict. Such conflict would be carried to Fort Simpson, and from there to tribal homelands. Nishga-Tsimshian violence occurred in the fort journal in the case of an attack on the Nishga trader, Ishateen (Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Fort Simpson Post Journal 1838-1840, July 30, 1839).

In the 1850s, gold brought non-Indian prospectors to the Nass and Skeena rivers. Rumors of gold on the Skeena attracted miners at the same time that a gold rush was occurring in the Queen Charlotte Islands. Although the Nishga reported finding various metals on the Nass River, and John Work visited the area to determine the importance of the finds, Nass River people were spared most of the impact of a gold rush (Bancroft 1887:347). Neshaki's stepson, Henry McNeill, was among the prospectors. The limited navigability of the Nass made it less attractive than the Skeena or Stikine Rivers as a trade route to the interior, thereby reducing the number of intruders. Overland access to the Nass River valley was also difficult.

The influence of the Carrier Indian prophet Beni continued to be strong in the interior of British Columbia in the late 1840s, including the "Pene Craze" of 1847-1848. As already noted, this revitalization movement spread down the Nass and Skeena Rivers to the Nishga and Tsimshian, and thence to others, including the Tlingit (Collison 1915:10; Miller 1984:142-143). Writing of this messianic and millenarian movement many years later, the Anglican missionary, Reverend William H. Collison, took a reconciling attitude. It illustrated, he thought, the religious nature of humans and their seeking for a satisfactory understanding of and relationship with the supernatural (Collison 1915; cf. Wallace 1956). The Anglican missionary, James B. McCullagh, took a similar view, seeing the movement as a precursor of Christianity (McCullagh n.d.).

It is not clear what impact the Beni religion may have had on the Nishga or how it may have affected their response to Christianity when the latter was introduced at Fort Simpson by the Anglican missionary, William Duncan, in the late 1850s. Rumley (1973:88) thinks that a coincidence of messianic and millenarian religious thought among missionaries and Indians may have aided

the spread of Christianity. During his first two visits to the Nishga in April and September of 1860, Duncan recorded remarks of his hosts in response to his evangelization which may be interpreted as showing some elements of millenarian expectations of dramatic social and cultural change. On the other hand, this may be reading too much into Duncan's translations of Nishga comments (Duncan 1860). Instead, the Nishga may have been echoing ideas expressed by Duncan's preaching at Fort Simpson.

In the 1860s, the Nishga took the initiative of inviting missionaries to the Nass River area. The first invitation was issued by Chief Kadounaha of the village of Ankida, who had heard Duncan speak at Fort Simpson. Another chief from the Nass River who had heard Duncan on his visits to Fort Simpson was Agweelakkah of Gitwinsilth, who greeted Duncan warmly on the latter's trip to the Nass. Agweelakkah was the uncle of Tacomash, Robert Doolan's first convert on the Nass. Cowcaelth (Philip Latimer), who became a Christian leader at Kincolith, and Chief Kinsada (George Kinsada), already mentioned as one of the most famous traders on the Nass, had also visited Fort Simpson and heard Duncan preach.

Between 1860 and 1864, young Nishga men continued to visit Fort Simpson and listen to Duncan's teaching. By the early 1880s, many leading Nishga chiefs, including Duncan's original hosts, had converted to Christianity and become Anglicans or Methodists. By the end of the nineteenth century, the majority of Nishga were Christians.

CONCLUSION

From their location on the Nass River, the Nishga could observe that sea life, the basis for much of their economy and subsistence, came to them. Their neighbors the Tlingit, Haida, Carrier, and Tsimshian, came to them. In the late eighteenth century, the fur traders also came to them, and in the early nineteenth century, the American missionary Jonathan Green came to them as well. In 1860, they called on the Anglican missionary William Duncan to come to them. Today, journalists, academics, industrialists, and politicians continue to come to them.

Nishga chiefs were social and political leaders among their people and were the leaders in trade. Thus, it is not surprising that the Nishga had an attitude which Europeans perceived as assertiveness, even hauteur. The Nishga were leaders; they were the people to whom other people came; they were the dominant political, spiritual, and economic figures of their own communities.

Because of their tradition of trading relationships with other

peoples, the Nishga were adaptive to outside influences. The diffusion of Nishga culture among neighboring peoples and their acceptance of cultural elements from neighbors illustrates receptivity to change.

The above quotation by Jonathan Green (1915:80) suggests that the demeanor of the Nishga as perceived by Green and others was a challenge to missionaries. Although the Nishga would be difficult to convert, success would be more rewarding because of the extra effort this had taken. In fact, assertiveness may have been a factor in Nishga character which led them to seek out non-Indian contact and European influences.

Nishga chiefs were willing to accept new technology. They were adaptive to new material culture, new trade, and complex diplomatic relations. This was part of their expertise, and a sphere of their dominance in native culture. Although Europeans sometimes portrayed the Nishga as hostile and aloof, this did not prove to be the case when they were visited by Hudson's Bay Company personnel and missionaries such as Donald Manson and the Reverend William Duncan. Perhaps outsiders' perceptions of the Nishga as hostile can be better understood as Nishga expression of determined independence, combined with an unwillingness to accept conditions and actions which seemed to threaten this independence.

Reconstruction of Nishga-European contact from the late eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century confirms the reiterated portrayal of the Nishga as confident, assertive, and independent. This optimistic view provides a background for continuous documentary accounts of the Nishga which were begun in the 1860s.

NOTES

1. For a reconstruction of the history of forts and trade routes of the Tsimshian in the late eighteenth century, see George F. MacDonald, "The Epic of Nekt," pp. 65-81 in Margaret Seguin, editor, *The Tsimshian: Images of the Past; Views for the Present* (1984). MacDonald's work opens new perspectives on the protohistory of the Northwest Coast.

2. Skotten's home village is not identified. The name Skotten may be the same as that of the senior Wolf Chief of Gitlakdamiks. Four or five decades later, missionary accounts mention the names Skoten, Skotain, or similar spellings. Fort officers and missionaries tended to change the spellings of Indian names as they tried to approximate English equivalents for the sounds they heard.

3. This name appears prominently in the late nineteenth century. Chief Kinsada of the Wolf clan of Ankida invited William Duncan to the Nass. Later, he became a Christian, moved to the village of Kincolith, and in 1888 became the first elected chief of Kincolith when it came under the Indian Advancement Act of 1884.

REFERENCES CITED

Bancroft, Hubert H.
1887 History of British Columbia. San Francisco, California: History Company Publishers.

Barbeau, C. Marius
1923 Indian Days in the Canadian Rockies. Toronto, Ontario: The Macmillan Company.
1950 Totem Poles. National Museum of Canada Bulletin Number 119, Anthropological Series Number 30, Volume 1:27-29. Ottawa, Ontario: Department of the Secretary of State.

Barnett, Homer G.
1953 Innovation. Toronto, Ontario: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Incorporated.

Berger, Thomas R.
1981 Fragile Freedoms. Toronto, Ontario: Clarke, Irwin, and Company, Limited.

Binns, Archie
1967 Peter Skene Ogden. Portland, Oregon: Binfords and Mort.

Codere, Helen
1972 Fighting with Property. Reprint edition. Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press.

Collison, William H.
1915 In the Wake of the War Canoe. New York: E. P. Dutton.

Dee, Henry D., ed.
1945 The Journal of John Work: January-October, 1835. Victoria, British Columbia: King's Printer.

Drucker, Philip
1955 Indians of the Northwest Coast. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Incorporated.

Duff, Wilson
1964 Contributions of Marius Barbeau to West Coast Ethnology. Anthropologica 6:63-96.

Duncan, William
1860 Journal of April 18ff., 1860 and September 6ff., 1860. Church Missionary Society Records, Microfilm Reel A105. Ottawa, Ontario: Public Archives of Canada.

Dunn, John
1844 History of the Oregon Territory and British North American Fur Trade. London: Edwards and Hughes.

Gough, Barry
1980 Distant Dominion. Vancouver, British Columbia: University of British Columbia Press.
Green, Jonathan
1915 Journal of a Tour on the Northwest Coast of America in the Year 1829. New York: Charles Frederick Heartman.
Gunther, Erna
1972 Indian Life on the Northwest Coast of North America. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press.
Halpin, Marjorie M.
1973 The Tsimshian Crest System. Vancouver, British Columbia: University of British Columbia Ph.D. Dissertation in Anthropology.
Hudson's Bay Company Archives
1832-1840 Fort Simpson Post Journal, 1832-1840. Hudson's Bay Company Archives Microfilm Reel HBC 1M141. Ottawa, Ontario: Public Archives of Canada.
1855-1859 Fort Simpson Post Journal, 1855-1859. Hudson's Bay Company Archives Microfilm Reel HBC 1M142. Ottawa, Ontario: Public Archives of Canada.

Jenness, Diamond
1943 The Carrier Indians of the Bulkley River. Anthropological Papers Number 25, Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 133:469-586. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office.
Kraus, Aurel
1956 The Tlingit Indians: Results of a Trip to the Northwest Coast of America and the Bering Straits. Erna Gunther, translator. American Ethnological Society Monograph 26. Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press. Originally published in 1885.
Large, R. G., ed.
1963 William Fraser Tolmie. Vancouver, British Columbia: Mitchell Press, Limited.
Lisiansky, Urey
1814 A Voyage Round the World in the Years 1803, 4, 5 and 6. London: John Beeth and Longmans Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown.
MacDonald, George F.
1970 Preliminary Culture Sequence from the Coast Tsimshian Area, British Columbia. Northwest Anthropological Research Notes 4:240-254.
1984 The Epic of Nekt. *In* The Tsimshian: Images of the Past; Views for the Present. Margaret Seguin, ed. pp. 65-81. Vancouver, British Columbia: University of British Columbia Press.
Manson, Donald
1832 Journal of a Voyage Up the Nass River. Hudson's Bay Company Archives Microfilm Reel HBC 1141, HBC B201/a/1. Ottawa, Ontario: Public Archives of Canada.

McCullagh, James B.
n.d. Red Indians I Have Known. London: Church Missionary Society.
Meilleur, Helen
1980 A Pour of Rain. Victoria, British Columbia: Sono Nis Press.
Miller, Jay
1984 Tsimshian Religion in Historical Perspective: Shamans, Prophets and Christ. *In* The Tsimshian and Their Neighbors. Jay Miller and Carol M. Eastman, eds. pp. 137-147. Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press.
Morice, Adrian F.
1971 The History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia. Reprint edition. Fairfield, Washington: Ye Galleon Press.
Quimby, George I.
1945 Culture Contact on the Northwest Coast, 1785-1795. American Anthropologist 50:247-255.
Patterson, E. P.
1981 Nishga Initiative and Missionary Response: Robert Dollan at Quinwoch, British Columbia. Missiology 9:337-344.

Rich, E. E., ed.
1941 The Letters of John McLoughlin From Fort Vancouver: First Series, 1825-38. Volume One. Toronto, Ontario: The Champlain Society.
Robinson, Michael P.
1978 Sea Otter Chiefs. n.p., British Columbia: Friendly Cove Press.
Rumley, Hilary F.
1973 Reactions to Contact and Colonization. Vancouver, British Columbia: University of British Columbia Master's Thesis in Anthropology.
Seguin, Margaret, ed.
1984 The Tsimshian: Images of the Past; Views for the Present. Vancouver, British Columbia: University of British Columbia Press.
Shotridge, Louis
1919 A Visit to the Tsimshian Indians. Pennsylvania Museum Journal 10:49-67, 139-140.
Spier, Leslie
1935 The Prophet Dance of the Northwest and its Derivations. Menasha, Wisconsin: George Banta Publishing Company.
Swanton, John
1970 Social Conditions, Beliefs, and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians. Bureau of American Ethnology 26th Annual Report. New York: Johnson Reprint Company. Originally published in 1904.

Tollefson, Kenneth D.
1976 The Cultural Foundation of Political Revitalization Among the Tlingit. Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Ph.D. Dissertation in Anthropology.
Van der Brink, J. H.
1974 The Haida Indians. Leiden, The Netherlands: E. J. Brill.
Vancouver, George
1967 Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and Round the World... Performed in 1790-1795 with the "Discovery" and the "Chatham" Under Captain George Vancouver. Three volumes. New York: Da Capo Press. Originally published in 1798.
Walbran, John T.
1972 British Columbia Coast Names, 1592-1906. Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press. Originally published in 1909.
Wallace, Anthony F. C.
1956 Revitalization Movements. American Anthropologist 58:264-281.