Children of the Raven: the Seven Indian Nations of the Northwest Coast

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Hopkins, an important dimension of a talented and versatile New Dealer will be lost. Hopkins did court politicians, business tycoons and generals while he practiced the craft of the "administrative breed," gracefully exchanging agencies and causes in an effort to serve both the public welfare and his own personal goals. Hopkins carefully balanced the requirements of the social worker and the politician, the reformer and the administrator; he was a professional altruist, an idealist working on matter and an ambitious functionary who appears in disguise throughout Kurzman's hagiographic study.

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The social cohesion and artistic achievements of the Kwakiutl, Bella Coola, Nootka, Coast Salish, Haida, Tlingit, and Tsim Sha peoples—what author H. R. Hays styles the "Children of the Raven"—have attracted the attention of several generations of scholars. But, complains Hays, the specialists have failed to communicate the message to the masses—hence the need for a popular account of the Northwest Coast Indians for the celebrated plumber in Cleveland with a bona fide interest in Indian history and culture, but with no systematic training on the subject. More important, perhaps, is the author's contention that these Native Americans have "yet to be appreciated and properly integrated into the heritage of North America," and the implication that what follows the Introduction accomplishes precisely that.

The first complaint involves the frustrations of leisure-time Americans and their technologically-prompted illiteracy—as such, subjects beyond the scope of this review. The second is more to the point, for its assertion requires the utilization of a reasoned strategy for integrating Native American history into the larger and more complex framework of the North American "heritage."


On the former the author scores high, for this is truly popular history on the classical model, as even the most casual inspection of the chapter bibliographies will suggest. On the latter the score is much lower. No matter how carefully the author has sugar-coated the complexities of Northwest Coast Indian history and culture with the now popular themes of environmentalism and ecological balance, he simply has not engaged in the kind of serious research required to achieve his objective.

How, for example, can one discuss the plight of the Northwest Coast fishermen, wholly outnumbered and confronted with European power politics, technology, and epidemic disease on the grand scale, with no mention of the role played by the Aborigines Protection Society in the Crown's formulation of a workable native policy? What of the great debate over assimilation in the early nineteenth century? How can one "properly" consider nearly two centuries of white aggression unless one examines at least a few of the unpublished manuscripts in the PRO in London, the PAC in Ottawa, or the Rhodes House Library? And what of the serious literature dealing with diplomatic maneuvers for control of the Northwest Coast?

Easy. Congratulate the anthropologists for their fine work among less fortunate people; take a trip to the scene (as the author did in 1973) and become an on-the-spot authority; compose twenty-nine lucid essays (with no footnotes) on selected topics of Northwest Coast Indian history and culture; and the plumber in Cleveland with thirteen dollars to spend will be satisfied. Readers of more serious purpose should look elsewhere.

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The Battle of New Market in May 1864 in the South's breadbasket, the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, is rightly considered a high point in Confederate military history. "There was no secondary battle of more importance in the war," declared one of the