

*Celebration: Tlingit, Haida,
Tsimshian Dancing on the Land*

Rosita Worl. Foreword by
Byron I. Mallott and essays by
Maria Williams and Robert
Davidson. Photographs by Bill
Hess. Edited by Kathy Dye.

Juneau/Seattle: Sealaska Heritage
Institute/University of Washington
Press, 2008. 152 pp. Illus.
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CONCERNED THAT not all Native Alaskan children had the opportunity to learn their communities' ancient songs and dances or to participate in traditional ceremony, the fledgling Native non-profit Sealaska Heritage Institute decided to hold a dance-and-culture festival in Juneau in 1982. Their objective was to celebrate the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian cultures of southeast Alaska. This first Celebration, which attracted about two hundred participants, has since grown to become the largest cultural event in the state, drawing thousands of people to the biennial five-day festival and prompting the formation of dance groups as well as the creation of new regalia throughout the region. The events have been documented through amateur and professional photography, video, television, and webcasts. This book adds to the mediated experience of Celebration, compiling 267 photographs, most of them by Bill Hess, into a kind of album representing the cultural communities and many of their elders, dancers, singers, and other participants.

Four essays by Tlingit cultural leader and anthropologist Rosita Worl explore

the historical context of Celebration, placing the contemporary gatherings within an accessible, informed discussion of ongoing attempts by Native people to assert control of their lands, economies, and cultural practices. These are supplemented with commentaries by Tlingit Kwaashk'i Kw'aan clan leader Byron Mallott, Tlingit/Carcross-Tagish ethnomusicologist Maria Williams, and Haida artist Robert Davidson. "The authors are Native artists and academics," notes Worl, who is also the book's editor; "and thus readers will see such words as *ku.éex'* and *at.óow* in lieu of the English words for 'potlatch' and 'property.' The English words fail to convey or embody Native concepts, and the Native words are used in the hopes of replacing some erroneous conceptions conveyed in earlier anthropological writings" (18). In this sense, the book celebrates but does not limit itself to celebratory discourse: Worl both acknowledges and problematizes the process of attempting translations across cultural, generational, and institutional boundaries – including describing the difficult decisions that had to be made by the Celebration Committee itself "because of the cultural complexities and sensitivities of integrating traditional practices into a new and secular event" (12). Moreover, the object-centred discourse that characterizes many books and exhibition catalogues about Northwest Coast Aboriginal art is here reoriented towards people and the connections between them, the spiritual and social values that supersede the status of ceremonial regalia as art objects, and the public context within which the preservation of cultural traditions is performed.

After I received a copy of this book for review, I had the opportunity of showing it to an Alaskan Tlingit acquaintance

who has attended Celebration over the years. She was curious to see how her experiences might be reflected in the publication, and she soon became engrossed in the black-and-white photos of earlier gatherings in the 1980s as well as in the colour-rich photos of more recent events. Almost all of the individuals pictured in the book are identified by name; she pointed at images of friends and relatives, laughing with pleasure at seeing them included and readily shedding tears at photos prompting memories of a beloved uncle since passed away or an aunt whose songs still ring in her ears. This book is highly visual and yet clearly emphasizes that which goes beyond the merely visual. Directed primarily towards an Aboriginal audience, it offers all readers an on-the-dance-floor picture of the importance of joy, memory, and recognition in affirming – and creating – community.

*Landing Native Fisheries:
Indian Reserves and Fishing
Rights in British Columbia,
1849-1925*

Douglas C. Harris

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008. 296
pp. Ill. \$32.95 paper.

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Landing Native Fisheries is an important contribution to the history of fisheries and a good companion to Harris' *Fish, Law, and Colonialism* (2001). This is a serious study that demonstrates conclusively that dispossession of Aboriginal lands in British Columbia left only tiny reserves