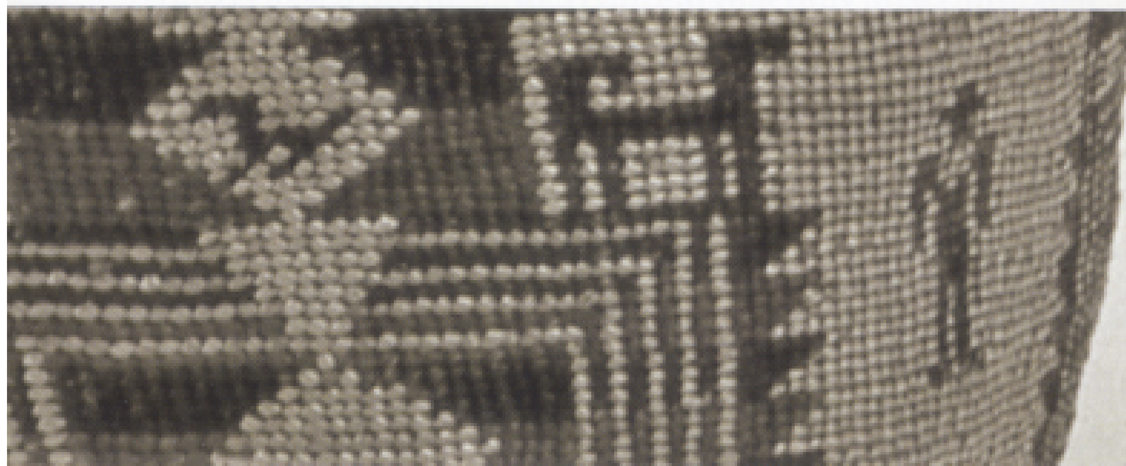


7

PUBLIC AWARENESS OF NORTHWEST COAST ART

AFTER THE INITIAL curiosity of the early travelers who, infused with the scientific spirit of the Enlightenment, acquired "artificial curiosities," until the 1880s, non-Native people paid relatively little attention to Northwest Coast art. Indeed, this region and its culture remained relatively unknown to the majority of Canadians and Americans until tourism, world's fairs, and museums provided opportunities for them to become familiar with a foreign yet impressive body of art. It is one of the great ironies of colonial history that once the Northwest Coast people had been subjected to governmental authority and converted to Christianity, thus turning into unthreatening minorities in their appropriated lands, their artistic culture became more valued. Indeed, so intriguing had Native culture become to outsiders that a group of Nuxalk dancers brought to Germany in 1886 proved to be an exceptionally popular attraction.

TOURISM

SHORTLY AFTER the completion in 1882 of the transcontinental railroad connecting the east and west coasts of the United States, passenger steamship service to Alaska on the Inside Passage began. Tourists could embark in San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, and Victoria and travel north. The naturalist John Muir wrote the following about the behavior of these 1890 travelers who stopped in Wrangell on their way to Glacier Bay:

> There was a grand rush on shore to buy curiosities and see totem poles. The shops were jammed and mobbed, high prices being paid for shabby stuff manufactured expressly for the tourist trade. Silver bracelets hammered out of dollars and half dollars by Indian smiths are the most popular articles, then baskets, yellow cedar toy canoes, paddles, etc.[1]

Even the extraordinary sights of Glacier Bay itself might be forgone for shopping:

> She arrived about 2:30 p.m. with two hundred and thirty tourists. What a show they made with their ribbons and Kodaks! All seemed happy and enthusiastic, although it was curious to see how promptly all of them ceased gazing [at the glacier] when the dinner-bell rang, and how many turned from the great thundering crystal world of ice to look curiously at the Indians that came alongside to sell trinkets.[2]

In Muir's time, as today, shopping for curios was a favorite pastime, for tourists wanted to return from this splendid land with some memento of their travels, usually in the form of a Native artwork.

The early tourists, fascinated by the totem poles they saw, ranked the poles among the "must-sees" on every tourist itinerary. For example, note the group of tourists exploring Alert Bay in figure 6.2. In addition, their desire for curios generated a demand for what has been disparagingly designated "tourist art." Certainly there exist many examples of tourist art on the Northwest Coast that are poorly made,

and doubtless Muir's descriptions of "shabby stuff" was accurate for some items created expressly for the tourist market. But many other pieces made for sale displayed craftsmanship as fine as in works used within Native communities.

Even today, another objection to such art is that because it was not used within the community, "tourist art" is inauthentic. This evaluation is based on the flawed concept that only unacculturated, pristine communities untouched by Euroamerican influences were authentic. In recent years, scholars have reassessed the nature of art made for outsiders, giving it the respect and credibility it fully deserves. It is axiomatic that any item made by a Native person is an authentic Native article, regardless of its intended destination, whether a potlatch or a mantlepiece in Philadelphia. The Native artist was fully aware that his creation was intended for outside consumption, and took advantage of the opportunity to share his culture with foreigners. Sometimes, in fact, tourist art was the *only* type approved of by teachers and missionaries, and thus the sole permissible expression of Native artistic culture.

The market for souvenirs stimulated the development of models and miniatures, which had doubtless been made in earlier times as children's toys. Especially popular were model totem poles (such as those made in Brady's school), thousands of which flooded the market. Dolls also found a willing market. Also valued by visitors were model canoes, which probably appealed especially to seamen who could admire these seaworthy vessels. Such models served not only as charming mementos of trips to this misty land, but also became valuable sources of ethnographic information. For example, no full-size "head canoe" described by the earliest travelers to the region exists in collections, but models such as the one shown in figure 2.8 document the early history of Northwest Coast water craft. Some artists included images of humans performing various activities, and sometimes artists even portrayed Euroamericans in their creations, such as the carving in figure 7.1, which depicts two sailors.

In addition to being works of art, desirable tourist purchases, and sources of ethnographic information, Northwest Coast souvenirs (and those of other regions as well) made significant contributions to the Native economy. By the late nineteenth century, Euroamericans and Canadians had so severely disrupted the traditional subsistence economy

7.1 Haida. Pair of sailors carved in argillite, c. 1845. *Argillite, ivory. 18.5 x 7.75 in.*

Thaw Collection, Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, NY, T187. Photo: John Bigelow Taylor, NYC.

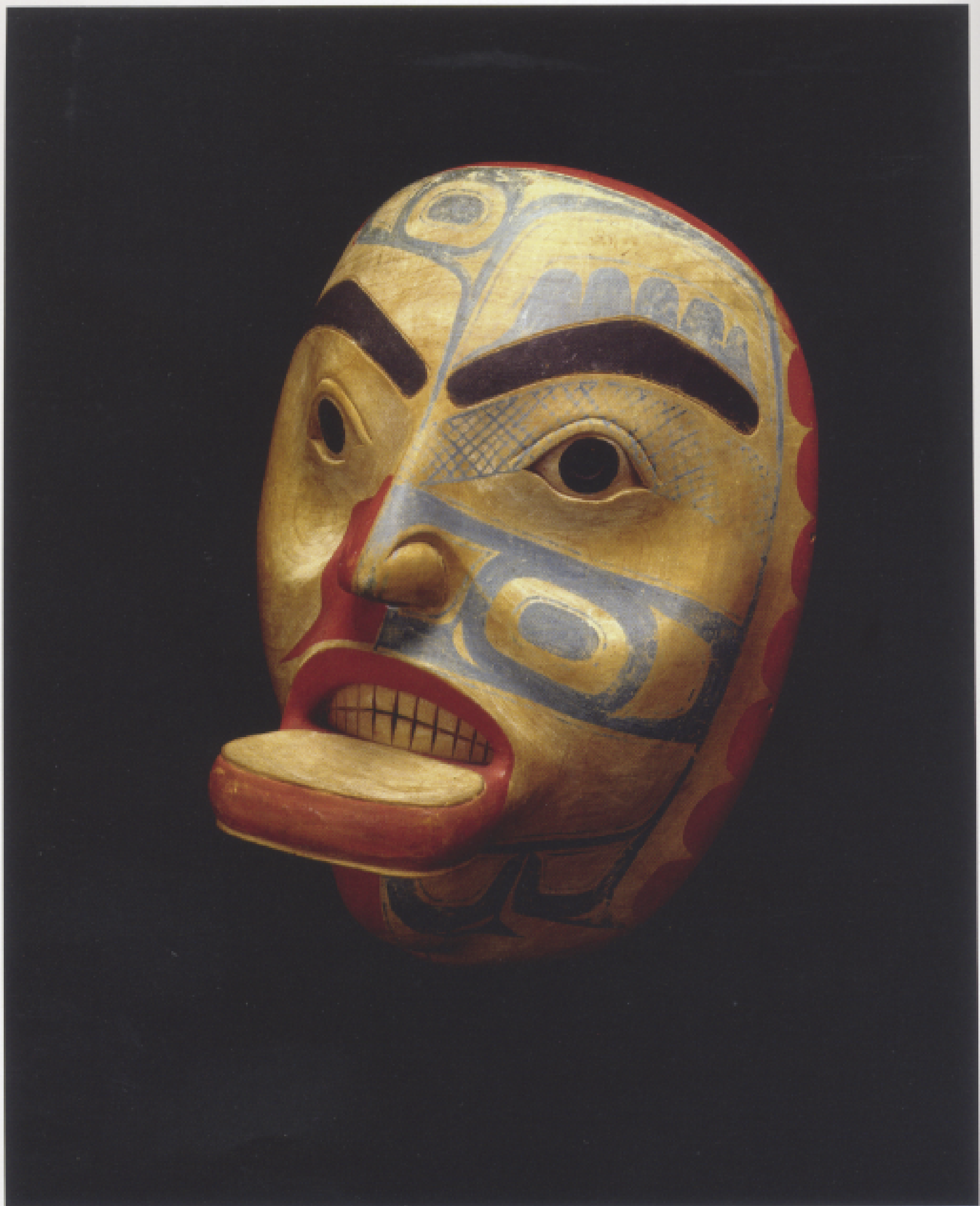
The residents of the Northwest Coast found the newcomers intriguing, and learned quickly of their lust for souvenirs. The Haida, who in the 1820s first carved argillite pipes for sailors who visited their land, began crafting figures of that material in the 1830s. Their attention to detail of clothing, hairstyle, and facial features suggests a fascination with these foreigners. After the 1862 smallpox epidemic, however, artists stopped carving Euroamericans and devoted themselves entirely to traditional Haida imagery.

that many Native people had to purchase food and other commodities from white-run stores. Because the market for tourist art coincided with the new need for cash, carved masks and woven baskets that had originally functioned within the community were sold alongside types of art made exclusively for the market, to provide much-needed income during a very difficult time.

HAIDA SOUVENIR ART

THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER discussed how the Haida willingly accepted education and religious conversion, and abandoned making most crest art. But this does not mean they stopped making all art. The ever-entrepreneurial Haida, who realized that merchants with whom they traded enjoyed returning home with souvenirs of their voyages, began making works to sell to the foreigners even before tourism developed. The works these Haida masters produced for sale duplicated the quality of art used within the community, and thus constitute a major body of nineteenth-century northern art. For example, in the 1820s a Kaigani Haida artist carved a mask of a labret-wearing female that eventually made its way to Harvard's Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology. Although an inscription inside the mask reads "A correct likeness of Jenna Cass, a high chief woman of the Northwest Coast," research has revealed that this image does not represent a real person, but instead depicts a supernatural ancestress of the Eagle moiety, Djilaqons. The same artist made other, similar masks of women with labrets (fig. 7.2), as did other Haida carvers, responding presumably to a market that favored that particular image.

The most important type of Haida souvenir art was made from argillite, a black carbonaceous shale quarried on Haida Gwaii. The earliest pieces they made expressly for sale during the 1820s were pipes that depict an assortment of interconnected beings surrounding a central receptacle for tobacco. Some early examples could have been used for smoking, but most later pipes became functionless objects of art, thinner and, with pierced elements, more delicate. (The Haida themselves did not smoke tobacco in aboriginal times, but apparently chewed a tobacco-like



7.2 Kaigani Haida. Mask, c. 1820. *Wood, pigment. 9.8 x 7.5 x 4 in.*

Photograph courtesy Peabody Essex Museum, E3483.

This mask, probably made for sale, shows the large labret that non-Natives found simultaneously fascinating and disgusting. Complementing the smooth, elegant carving are asymmetric blue and red formline painting and cross hatching, which represent facial painting. Several masks exist by this carver, who appears to have lived in Kasaan. Several other similar masks by different hands suggest that a group of artists made these masks of labret-wearing women that became popular souvenirs.

7.3 Haida. Pipe in the shape of a ship, c. 1840. *Argillite. 13.4 x 4 in.*
Royal British Columbia Museum, 16155.

On this pipe, which represents a Euroamerican vessel, are carved leaves, flowers, and berries, which are not found in traditional Haida imagery. It has been suggested that these vegetal motifs allude to the tobacco plant, which, according to Haida histories, was first brought to Haida Gwaii by Raven.

plant.) Images on these carvings included the beings familiar in the wood carver's repertoire—birds, mammals, anthropomorphic figures. The subject matter of Haida argillite carving changed around the 1830s, when, responding perhaps to the demands of the marketplace, artists began making portraits of ships and their captains. Carvers often created fanciful depictions of stylized ships adorned sometimes with non–Northwest Coast motifs of flowers, leaves, and berries, and variously populated by men, women, and animals such as horses and dogs (fig. 7.3). The Haida appeared to have enjoyed depicting these strangers to their lands, who in turn appreciated such exotic images of themselves.

From 1840 to 1860, non-Haida subjects remained popular in Haida art, but this changed after the great smallpox epidemic of 1862. After that devastating event, demand for totem poles, houses, and ceremonial regalia artworks declined. This was in part because fewer people were alive to commission them, and in part because the missionaries who converted the Haida insisted that they abandon their traditions. Consequently, most surviving artists began concentrating almost exclusively on carvings made for sale to outsiders, producing prodigious amounts of argillite works—but almost exclusively with Haida images. Platters, candlestick holders, bowls, boxes, and inkwells became fields for exquisite formline designs. Ravens, eagles, and bears reappeared on

7.4 Charles Edenshaw, Haida. Argillite chest. *17.7 x 12 x 14.6 in.*

Royal British Columbia Museum, 10622.

Traditional Northwest Coast art is rarely narrative, because the stories associated with images are meant to be told, not visually represented. However, non-Natives favored works that told a story, and argillite carvers accommodated their wishes. Charles Edenshaw often depicted Raven tales, such as this one showing Raven transforming into human form as he stands on the clamshell from which humans emerge. He seems to be smiling, perhaps pleased at the appearance of these new creatures. The complexity of this carving, as well as its elegant combination of two- and three-dimensional components, might also be Edenshaw's response to the market, which would have appreciated the emerging faces on the sides, and the box feet made of little frogs.

these portable objects, but with a difference. The artists knew that white consumers liked stories, and thus sometimes incorporated into their creations narrative themes—and sometimes even emotions—that did not appear in more traditional artworks.

Argillite offered the Haida an acceptable means of maintaining their art traditions, and offered support for Haida masters, some of whose names we know: John Gwaytihl (c. 1820–1912), Simeon Stilthda (c. 1799–1889), and the most famous Haida carver of all during this period, Charles Edenshaw (1839–1920), the nephew of Albert Edward

7.5 Isabelle and Charles Edenshaw, Haida. Hat, late 19th century.
Spruce root, pigment. 7 x 17 in.
Courtesy UBC Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver, Canada, 4407. Photo: B. McLennan.

This artist couple made basketry hats, as well as mats and baskets, for sale. Most of these were sold at Robert Cunningham's trading post at Port Essington. This series of shots shows how the painter used the conical surface of the hat to create the image of a killer whale. At the front, two profile whale heads face one another and together create a broad frontal face. Rotating the hat presents the profile image of a killer whale with an erect fin. Then, at the back, both profiles meet again to create the tail. This "splitting" of the animal on a two-dimensional surface to depict a three-dimensional being is a characteristic of some Northwest Coast graphic art. The painting on this hat is here rendered visible by the use of infrared photography.

Edenshaw. Among Charles Edenshaw's numerous argillite carvings is a complex box that depicts Raven and the first humans (fig. 7.4). According to the story, humans did not exist on the earth that Raven had organized, until he discovered a group of them in a clamshell on a beach at Rose Spit. In his interpretation of this event, Edenshaw made Raven into a hybrid being, his face containing both human and bird features, his feet a composite of toes and claws. He stands on the bivalve, looking at a row of diminutive human faces nestled within.

Edenshaw's wife, Isabelle Edenshaw (1846–1920), was also a Haida artist of note. Haida women were distinguished for the elegance and refinement of their woven and painted spruce-root hats which, like the Chilkat robe, were the product of collaboration between a man and a woman. Isabelle Edenshaw skillfully wove the hat shown in figure 7.5 using plain twining on the upper part and diamond-shaped twining on the lower portion. Gracefully inhabiting this field is a finely painted orca, which does not entirely cover the surface but rather is depicted with thin formlines through which the perfection of the basketry technique can be seen.

7.6 Tlingit women, probably Taku, selling baskets in the Juneau area, c. 1894.
University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, NA905. Photo: F. La Roche.

This was a common scene encountered by tourists coming off steamers. A group of women sit near the Juneau waterfront showing their creations to tourists, who often returned home with such mementos of their trip north. The lively trade during the turn-of-the-century "basket craze" provided much-needed income for Native families. Notice the size range of the baskets—from diminutive to more than a foot high. In addition to baskets, some women sell small glass bottles covered with decorated twined weaving.

BASKETS

AT THE TURN of the century, a "basket craze" spread through the United States that supported a thriving industry for Native American women. Victorian parlors often had a special table for small collectibles, including the ever-popular Indian basket. Because they were finely crafted and handmade from natural materials by Indians—that is, by people considered less evolved, less "civilized," and more closely connected to nature—Native American baskets held special appeal for people increasingly pressured by industrialization and urbanization. Basket weavers from the Southwest, California, Washington State, British Columbia, and Alaska discovered an enthusiastic and seemingly limitless market for their creations, and began producing enormous numbers of baskets. These

were sometimes sold in stores, and sometimes directly by the weavers themselves.

Basket selling thrived on tourism, for here were attractive, lightweight souvenirs that could easily be transported home. Throughout the coast, Native women waited by the steamer docks to sell their creations to willing consumers who streamed off and onto their vessels (fig. 7.6). Tlingit women in particular were renowned for their fine spruce-root baskets, some of which they used for subsistence activities such as berrying or storing food, others of which were made especially for visitors (fig. 7.7). The former tended to be thicker for sturdiness, and sometimes included geometric designs. Baskets made for tourists tended to be smaller, so as to fit nicely into a Victorian curio cabinet.

Several Salish and Wakashan groups farther south also became highly regarded by consumers for their basketry skill. The Twana made some of the most distinctive Salish baskets, using wefts of cattail and warps of cedar bark or beargrass. The example shown here (fig. 7.8) has a row of what might be wolves and little birds underneath a scalloped rim, and geometric anthropomorphs stand in vertical rows. Between those rows are geometric designs with doglike creatures.

The Nuu-chah-nulth and Makah also made baskets for trade. Especially important as trade items were lidded cedar-bark and grass baskets that often depicted whaling scenes. An unusual example of this type of Makah basket is the one shown in figure 7.9, which illustrates a whale being towed not by the conventional canoe, but instead by a motorized boat. And on the lid are four anchors, images that the artist appropriated from the non-Native nautical world. Most basket makers, like the artist who made this lidded basket, are anonymous, so the identification and celebration of a particular artist is unusual. However, there is one woman whose fine work has become renowned—Ellen Curley (birth and death dates unknown) not only produced exquisite baskets but also revived the practice of making the bulb-topped "Maquinna hats." The especially elaborate piece shown in figure 7.10 includes scenes of canoes with paddlers and of a harpooner pointing his weapon toward a whale, colorful bands at the brim and under the "onion" portion, geometric motifs, and an unusual tip made from ivory.

7.7 Tlingit. Baskets. *Spruce root, maidenhair fern, dyed grass. Largest: H. 9.5 in.*
University of Alaska Museum of the North, (left to right) 840-60AB, 840-8, 67-98-101AB, 840-2, 840-44, 840-30. Photo: Barry McWayne.

For centuries Tlingit women made spruce-root baskets for berry picking and food storage. Market forces stimulated them to make smaller, more transportable items with thinner split spruce roots and finer weaving that was especially attractive to serious basket collectors. These became among the most desirable mementos for tourists who visited southeast Alaska. Tlingit basket weavers created their designs by using a technique called false embroidery, in which a strand of decorative material is wrapped around the outside of the exposed weft. Unlike other modes of decoration, designs made in this way cannot be seen on the inside of the basket. The geometric designs each have the name of a natural element or animal, such as Wave, seen on the body and lid edge of the leftmost basket; Mouth Track of the Woodworm, on the top and bottom of the next basket to the right; and Goose Track and Half the Head of a Salmonberry on the far-right piece.

7.8 Salish. Twana basket, late 19th century.

Cattail leaves, beargrass, cedar bark. 14.6 x 12 x 10.6 in.

Courtesy of the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture, Catalog Number 1-507.

Of the variety of basket types made historically by the Twana, this basket made of soft twining and overlay decoration represents the favorite type for trade, which became very popular among collectors. These commodified items are elaborations of the simpler, more restrained Twana style of the early 19th century (see fig. 3.8). Typical of these trade baskets is the line of animals just under the rim; in this example the procession includes wolves with downturned tails and mergansers. Dogs with up-curled tails, small mergansers, and men populate the body of the basket. The rectangles within rectangles on the center seem to have some affiliation with the squares within squares on the bottom of the Wasco-Wishram bowl shown in figure 1.18, and could represent boxes or fishnets.

7.9 Makah. Basket, 20th century. *Cedar bark, grass. 14.5 x 7.5 in.*

Courtesy of the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture, Catalog Number 1-507.

In Makah and Nuu-chah-nulth wrapped-twining technique, two weft strands are used, an uncolored one that passes the warp at the back forming a latticework, and a colored one that wraps around that inside weft as well as the warp. This technique produced small, delicate, very fine work such as this basket, and differed from the more traditional twining of earlier basketry. Wrapped twining was probably inspired by the market, as was the prevalence of the cylindrical shape with lid, called a trinket basket. During the 19th century, most Nuu-chah-nulth and Makah baskets were decorated with geometric images, but by the 20th century weavers began to make figurative designs. Many such trade baskets depict scenes of hunters in canoes pursuing whales; this example brings that concept up to date by illustrating a steamer pulling the whale, which in turn tows the hunters by means of a harpoon line. Four anchors encircle the lid. The unusually large size and perfection of technique distinguish this work as especially masterful.

7.10 Ellen Curley, Nuu-chah-nulth. Maquinna hat, c. 1905.
Grass, red cedar bark, ivory.
© Field Museum, A113772c.

Little other than her name is known about this excellent weaver from the village of Opitsaht. She was brought to the St. Louis world's fair in 1904, where she demonstrated her skill at basketmaking. The museum collector Charles F. Newcombe, who arranged for Curley to visit the fair, probably commissioned the piece shown here. Curley was asked to weave a whaler's hat (see fig. 2.5), and she produced this elaborate version with geometric designs that include some bright colors. The original Maquinna hats were made with overlay twining, but Curley employed the wrapped twining used for trade baskets (see fig. 7.9).

PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILM

PHOTOGRAPHS OF villages and objects in situ, such as the curving line of houses and totem poles in Skidegate (see fig. 1.2) and regalia worn at the Sitka potlatch (see fig. 6.5), greatly enhance one's understanding of Northwest Coast art. These images were taken for a variety of reasons that include anthropological records, documentation of colonial lands, and commercial profit. Professionals conducting research in the region often took photographs. George Mercer Dawson visited Haida Gwaii in 1878 on a Geological Survey expedition mainly to identify potential mineral resources, and took the 1878 image of Skidegate. Soon after British Columbia became a province, government agents, accompanied by professional photographers, began conducting "inspection tours" of villages. Israel Wood Powell, Indian commissioner and local history buff, tried to retrace the routes of late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century explorers when he traveled to coastal villages in the 1870s and 1880s. Powell especially liked having his photograph taken in villages, such as when he visited the Nuxalk town of Komkotes (see fig. 4.10).

In 1893, a team of two professional photographers, Lloyd Winter and Percy Pond, opened up a studio in Juneau and began producing images of Tlingit and Haida villages, house exteriors and interiors, potlatches, and groups of Native people and individuals, sometimes in traditional garb, sometimes in store-bought clothing. These constitute one of the finest arrays of southeast Alaska Native images, a couple of which appear in this book (figs. 1.1 and 5.6). Winter and Pond sold their photographs both to tourists at their store and to books and magazines through a national agency. At this time there was a significant market for photographs of Native Americans, and Winter and Pond's high-quality photographs, taken using glass-plate negatives, became commercially successful. They also transformed some of their images, such as that of the Whale House interior, into postcards which, like the baskets described above, became exceedingly popular collector's items during what could be called a "postcard craze" between 1895 and 1915. During that era, thousands of postcards depicting totem poles brought Northwest Coast art into the homes of people who had never visited Alaska or British Columbia.

Another photographer of distinction is Edward Curtis, known for his images of Native Americans taken as documents of the "vanishing Americans." On the Northwest Coast, Curtis took pictures of Native people and also filmed among the Kwakwaka'wakw one of the earliest full-length silent movies, *In the Land of the Head-Hunters*. This boy-gets-girl–boy-loses-girl–boy-gets-girl-again story was filmed largely on a set created by Kwakwaka'wakw artists on an island near Fort Rupert. In keeping with Curtis's insistence that his subjects present themselves as they existed prior to influence of Euroamericans, the actors wore shredded-cedar-bark garments that had been out of style for decades, and paddled large decorated canoes popular during previous generations. In addition to serving as actors, the villagers made costumes, carved masks, canoes, house posts, and totem poles, and painted elaborate facades to ensure the verisimilitude of this production. In doing so, they made good money and are said to have had a good time. The Kwakwaka'wakw found the project important for themselves, for the entire production allowed them to experience, if only temporarily and on film, their ancestors' way of life.

This film has provided some of the most unforgettable images of Kwakwaka'wakw ceremonial life. The scene with canoes approaching land, carrying three masked dancers—Wasp, Thunderbird, and Bear—dramatically waving their arms and swaying their bodies, has captured the imagination of many (fig. 7.11). Another distinctive image shows a large group of masked dancers who appear when a curtain is suddenly dropped. Even the village—which in reality consisted only of a row of false fronts—is impressive. A tall frontal pole, similar to one from Alert Bay, has at its bottom a raven with projecting beak; normally closed, the beak opened when people entered the house. Within the roofless house, which consisted of just sides and a rear wall, stood two large house posts by artist Charlie James, depicting a bear surmounted by a spread-winged thunderbird. Because Curtis used the same set for different houses, he needed to alter the look of their interiors; he did this by removing the wings of these house posts, which then represented crests of other families. These posts ultimately made their way to Stanley Park in Vancouver, where they stood for almost three quarters of a century until they so

7.11 Dance of the Grizzly Bear, Thunderbird, and Wasp. Still frame from Edward Curtis's film *In the Land of the Head-Hunters*, 1914.
Courtesy of the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture, Plate #35. Photo: Edmund Schwinke.

In 1914, photographer Edward Curtis worked with the Kwakwaka'wakw to film a feature-length love story he hoped would be a commercial success. It was, unfortunately, not. However, the film, restored under the name *In the Land of the War Canoes*, provides remarkable scenes of hunting, feasting, and dancing. This unforgettable image shows masked dancers on their way to a wedding. Bear, Thunderbird, and Wasp perform on the groom's family's canoes as they approach the bride's village.

deteriorated that they were removed, to be replaced by a copy carved by contemporary carver Tony Hunt.

Edward Curtis did not make the kind of money from this film that he had hoped. After an unsuccessful opening, *In the Land of the Head-Hunters* disappeared from the world of cinema and was soon forgotten. In the late 1940s, a damaged copy of this film was given to the Field Museum in Chicago by a collector of old movies. In the 1960s, George Quimby, director of the Burke Museum at the University of Washington in Seattle,

collaborated with fellow curator, artist, and Northwest Coast Native art scholar Bill Holm, to restore this valuable cinematographic document. Holm brought the film to the Kwakwaka'wakw in Fort Rupert, some of whom were descendants of the actors. In a contemporary version of Curtis's involvement of Fort Rupert residents to create the film, Holm worked with the contemporary Kwakwaka'wakw to make a soundtrack of the speeches and songs. The film was rereleased in 1967 under a new name, *In the Land of the War Canoes*, and is now recognized as a classic of its genre.

MUSEUMS

AS COLONIALISM around the globe irrevocably changed the lives of aboriginal peoples, the discipline of anthropology developed in order to record and understand those cultures. While tourists were seeking out small items with which to return home, museum collectors combed the Northwest Coast for artifacts that would make interesting exhibits thousands of miles away. Much of the professional collecting, which occurred between 1880 and 1920, was inspired by a certainty that all these cultures were rapidly disappearing, and that their remnants had to be salvaged for science. Because it was believed that Euroamerican influence "tainted" the authenticity of Native culture, collectors were urged to acquire the oldest, least acculturated items and forgo anything that seemed to include non-Native materials. (But in fact, as the preceding chapters have demonstrated, the influence of Euroamericans on Northwest Coast art from first contact on had been considerable.) In addition to such purely scientific motivation, museums also competed with each other to acquire the largest and finest array of Native material.

In 1897, anthropologist Franz Boas initiated the Jesup North Pacific Expedition, named after the then-president of the American Museum of Natural History, Morris K. Jesup, which sent anthropologists and archeologists to British Columbia and eastern Siberia to collect objects, record myths, and describe cultures. Between 1897 and 1901, thousands of artifacts from and pages of information on these cultures entered the museum's collections. The result was an outstanding collection of

Northwest Coast material (particularly from the Kwakwaka'wakw) at the American Museum of Natural History, along with major ethnographic publications. And thanks to Boas's explicit instructions to collectors to "get the stories" associated with artifacts, the documentation on Jesup North Pacific objects is especially rich. Several items illustrated in this book (figs. 1.6, 4.2, 4.9) were collected during this expedition.

Museums searching for ethnographic collections sometimes benefited from the changing values of Native people themselves. Of all Tlingit cultural practices, shamanism was the one that most disturbed white officials and missionaries. Shamans were accused of witchcraft and imprisoned, and missionaries urged their congregations to reject their "dark magic." By the twentieth century, shamanism seems to have disappeared not only among the Tlingit, but throughout virtually all of the Northwest Coast. Although the Tlingit converted to Christianity during the last decades of the nineteenth century and turned away from their reliance on shamans, they remained wary of their powers. Fortuitously, Lt. George Thorton Emmons of the United States Navy, a man fascinated by Native life, was stationed in southeast Alaska during the 1880s. He became good friends with various Tlingit, who told him of the locations of remote shaman's graves. These contained the regalia as well as the bones of the deceased, and it is possible that even these converted Tlingit feared the power emanating from these objects and appreciated their removal. As a result, Emmons collected from these burials hundreds of shamanic objects, which he sold to museums including the American Museum of Natural History, the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, and the Burke Museum in Seattle. The presence of large numbers of shamanic artworks in museums across the United States could be in part due to the recently converted Tlingit's avoidance of such potent items.

Museum collecting presented certain moral issues that remain problematic to this day. In their rush to obtain the most and the best from the Northwest Coast, collectors sometimes crossed ethical lines. Even Boas himself removed human remains from cemeteries in order to conduct osteological research. Louis Shotridge, a Tlingit nobleman employed by the University of Pennsylvania's University Museum from 1912 to 1932, often pressured members of his community to sell their priceless clan

treasures, knowing full well how this would deprive families of their most cherished possessions. In addition to purchasing such *at.oow*, Shotridge even tried, unsuccessfully, to steal the Klukwan Whale House artworks, after the clan refused to sell them.

Another interesting case was that of George Hunt, who collected large amounts of material during the Jesup North Pacific Expedition for the American Museum of Natural History. Hunt, the son of a Hudson's Bay Company official and a noble Tlingit woman, was raised in Fort Rupert and served as a consultant on the Kwakwaka'wakw for Edward Curtis and for Franz Boas. After the conclusion of the Jesup Expedition, Hunt continued to collect Northwest Coast material for the American Museum of Natural History. In 1903, he heard stories of an unusual and important shrine used for whaling magic, located in Yuquot on the west coast of Vancouver Island (the site discussed above in the section on the Nuu-chah-nulth, pp. 122–25). He traveled there, and asked the chief to let him see the shrine that stood on an island in a lake not far from the village. The response was that only people with great spirit power like shamans could see it, inspiring Hunt to claim that he was a shaman. The chief then ordered Hunt to cure a sick person who, luckily, recovered, and Hunt was allowed to see the shrine.

The next year, Hunt returned to Yuquot and offered the chief $500 for the carvings, human remains, and structure of the shrine. Before the transaction was finalized, another chief approached Hunt, insisting that *he* owned the shrine. After considerable negotiation, an agreement was reached that each chief would receive $250. But they also insisted that Hunt take it all in absolute secrecy, to keep the community unaware of the shrine's removal. This underhandedness has led to the accusation by some contemporary individuals, both Native and non-Native, that Hunt actually stole the shrine, although no irrefutable evidence of this exists. The shrine and its contents were packed up and shipped to New York City, but Boas resigned from the American Museum of Natural History at about the time it arrived, and it has remained in storage until this time.

WORLD'S FAIRS

Some Northwest Coast collections were first presented to the public not at museums but at international expositions. World's fairs had originated in Europe as public spectacles glorifying the benefits of colonialism. London's 1851 Great International Exposition celebrated the transformation of raw goods from the colonies into economic prosperity for Britain. Ethnographic and archeological objects joined the natural products of the colonies in the 1867 Paris Exposition. In 1889, at that year's Paris Exposition, colonized people themselves became exhibits, when 182 Africans and Asians wearing their aboriginal garments lived in "traditional" houses organized into "native villages" and performed authentic, if staged, ceremonies. The underlying message of these and other world's fairs was that the undeveloped natural resources and backward inhabitants of colonies were ready for European control. Fairgoers could experience for themselves the commodities of the colonies—first raw materials, then artifacts, and, finally, people themselves—all waiting to be exploited by the superior civilization.

Fairs in the United States also celebrated development and featured the superiority of whites over all other races. Despite Boas's efforts to refute social Darwinism by highlighting the effects of historical events on relationships among racial groups, the prevailing ideology at the turn of the century was that dark-skinned races stood on the lowest rungs of the evolutionary ladder, whereas light-skinned people held the highest positions, because, they had evolved much farther. This twisted form of evolutionism ideologically endorsed American nationalism and "scientifically" legitimated imperialism and segregation. At some fairs, the anthropologists from institutions such as Harvard and the Smithsonian who organized ethnographic displays bestowed academic respectability upon presentations of "primitives" as lowly and whites as superior. As a result, the Native exhibits reinforced white Americans' conventional perception of Native peoples as inferior aliens.

Fairs became the principal locations for exhibits of Native artworks. The first such display occurred in 1876, when Smithsonian Institution decided to exhibit Native American material at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition. Among the various collectors sent to the field to

acquire objects for this display was James Swan, who lived in northwestern Washington State and had longtime relationships with many Native groups. He was assigned to travel north and collect Native materials for the coming world's fair. In addition to acquiring a wide range of smaller artifacts, Swan purchased several totem poles, an art form that up until this point most Americans had never actually seen. After the fair, the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C., added these materials to its collections (see figs. 1.4 and 4.3).

In 1893, Chicago hosted the World's Columbian Exposition, which celebrated the four-hundredth anniversary of Columbus's landing in the New World. The theme of this fair was "Progress," by which was meant white progress. Like the Philadelphia fair earlier, this one, too, had ethnographic displays, managed by Frederic Ward Putnam, director of Harvard's Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology. Putnam put Franz Boas in charge of the Northwest Coast exhibit. Boas in turn assigned several residents of the region, including George Hunt, the task of collecting pieces. The result was an exhibit including several totem poles and two entire houses, one Haida, the other Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw, that had been disassembled at their villages of origin and rebuilt on the fairground. The houses and the sweep of totem poles in the Northwest Coast section of the fair (fig. 7.12) offered visitors a sense of the variety of British Columbia coastal styles. Hunt also convinced a group of Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw to stay at the fair during its duration, as a living cultural exhibit. They also performed some impressive dances, including the *hamatsa*—which created quite a stir in Chicago. The newly founded Field Museum of Natural History made the Columbian Exposition objects the core of its Northwest Coast collections.

Another fair with a strong Northwest Coast presence took place during 1904 in St. Louis, in celebration of the centennial of the Louisiana Purchase. In addition to Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw and Nuu-chah-nulth "living exhibits," an impressive array of Alaskan totem poles stood before the Alaska building, thanks to the efforts of that state's governor at the time, John Brady. These were the poles that, as described in the previous chapter, Brady had negotiated with southeast Alaskan chiefs to donate to a park in Sitka. The governor was anxious to dispel the commonly held belief that Alaska was a frozen, barren wasteland, so

7.12 Chicago World's Columbian Exposition, Northwest Coast Indian outdoor exhibition, 1893.

Haida house at left, Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw house in center.

American Museum of Natural History Library, 322897.

World's fairs sometimes included "living displays" of Native people from various parts of the world. In 1893, a group of Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw traveled south and east to live for the duration of the Chicago world's fair in the large house in the center of this photograph. That entire structure was transported from Vancouver Island and erected on the fairgrounds. At the left in the photograph is a smaller Haida house. In addition to the houses, several totem poles were brought to Chicago for the fair. The person who acquired and assembled this display of houses and totem poles was Franz Boas's colleague and collaborator, George Hunt, who stands before the second pole from the right. The items later became part of the collection of the Field Museum of Natural History.

as to attract new (white) settlers to the region. He believed that totem poles had a special appeal, so decided to send the donated poles all the way to St. Louis for the fair. Brady hoped that people, attracted to the monumental carvings, would then enter the Alaska building and see its exhibits—which would, he hoped, encourage them to move north. The next year another exposition was held in Portland, Oregon, where the same poles were erected outside that fair's Alaska Building. After the close of the Portland exposition in 1905, Brady's totem pole collection returned to Sitka, where it found a permanent home at what would become the Sitka National Historical Park. Set along a path through the thickly forested woods, the poles became a major tourist attraction in this community that had once been the capital of Russian America. Over the years these monuments deteriorated, were restored, and were ultimately replaced by newer versions.

COMMISSIONING ART

SOMETIMES the owner of a desirable object refused to sell it to a collector. If the collector really wanted the item, he could commission an artist to make a replica. In 1881, the Berlin Ethnographic Museum sent Johan Adrien Jacobsen to the Northwest Coast to collect. In the Heiltsuk community of Waglisla (Bella Bella), an elegantly carved and painted chief's seat caught Jacobsen's eye. He could not persuade its owner to relinquish possession of the masterpiece, so he commissioned Captain Carpenter (1841–1931), a high-ranking and well-respected artist and presumably the creator of the box shown in figure 4.8, to create a replica of the seat (fig. 7.13). This chief's seat includes a boldly carved three-dimensional masklike face, a painted bird's body on the chair's back, and elegant formline images on the arms and seats.

Ethnographers sometimes commissioned models of larger items such as totem poles and houses. One especially striking example of this was exhibited at the Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893: a small-scale rendering of the entire village of Skidegate as it was thought to have looked in 1864. James Deans, a Hudson's Bay Company employee from Victoria, commissioned several Haida to create this model specifically for the fair. Following proper protocol, and acknowledging the Haida

7.13 Replica of a chief's settee from Waglisla (Bella Bella), Captain Carpenter, Heiltsuk. Commissioned 1881 by J. A. Jacobsen.
Yellow cedar, red cedar, pigment.
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin - Preussischer Kulturbesitz Ethnologisches Museum, IVA 2475/76/77.

Furniture like this was reserved for the highest-ranking individuals, who sat on them near the fire. Johan Adrien Jacobsen, a collector for the Berlin Ethnographic Museum, saw a settee in the village of Waglisla (Bella Bella) that he desired, but could not purchase it. So he commissioned one from a local artist who has been identified as Captain Carpenter, a member of the Blackfish clan, who was born in the Heiltsuk village of 'Qvuqvai in 1841, but then moved to Waglisla to be nearer the Hudson's Bay trading post. He was a high-ranking chief who twice married aristocratic women and hosted several significant potlatches throughout his life.

concept of ownership of crests, Deans asked the individual Skidegate families to make copies of their own houses and totem poles. The entire assemblage of twenty-five houses, six mortuary posts, two burial houses, and ten memorial poles was set on a fifty-foot-wide platform with a background screen painted with hills and trees, and was exhibited in the fair's anthropology building.

During the Jesup North Pacific Expedition, Franz Boas sent John Swanton, a young recent Ph.D. from Harvard, to Haida Gwaii, where he stayed from 1900 to 1901, collecting ethnographic information. When Swanton visited Massett, he met Charles Edenshaw. Earlier, Boas, who considered Edenshaw the best living Haida artist, had taken advantage of his extensive knowledge. When they met in 1897, Edenshaw explained facial paintings, interpreted designs on artworks, illustrated Haida images, and narrated myths for Boas. Swanton also found Edenshaw's knowledge of great value, and commissioned him to make some model totem poles, model canoes, and a house model. Around the same time, the British Museum commissioned Edenshaw's contemporary, John Gwaytihl, to create a house model that featured a replica of a pole in the museum's collection (fig. 7.14). Thus Edenshaw, Gwaytihl, and other Northwest Coast artists could profit from both the tourist market and anthropological commissions. In this way many of their traditions were maintained, despite the assurance of "experts" that Northwest Coast culture was disappearing.

NORTHWEST COAST ART IN MUSEUMS

DURING THE DECADES when more and more non-Natives settled on the Northwest Coast, huge quantities of objects were removed from their original villages. Acquisition of ethnographic objects had begun well before the nineteenth century, for the earliest travelers such as Captain Cook and Malaspina collected "curiosities" from the lands they explored, bringing valuable early Northwest Coast works into European museums. But the numbers of new accessions accelerated enormously between 1880 and 1920. With the exception of objects in the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka and a handful of other small institutions, very few pieces discussed in this book can be seen today north of Vancouver,

7.14 John Gwaytihl. Haida house model, 1898.
Wood and pigment. 19.8 x 15 x 34.7 in.
© The Trustees of the British Museum, 10-20.1/150.

The carver of this model, John Gwaytihl of Massett, made masks, model houses, canoes, and totem poles of wood. He did not work in argillite, a material many other artists of his generation used extensively. The original of this model, Bear House, stood in Kayang, a village near Massett. The proportions of the pole to the house itself are inaccurate, but serve to bring attention to the central totem pole, which also functions as the house entrance.

B.C., near their places of origin. Instead, thousands upon thousands of them reside in the exhibits or storage areas of places such as the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, Chicago's Field Museum, the Burke Museum on the University of Washington campus in Seattle, and the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia. Others are in European institutions such as the British Museum and the Vienna Ethnographic Museum.

The most prized object for museums was the totem pole. In 1901 Charles Newcombe, collecting for the Field Museum of Natural History,

7.15 The Northwest Coast hall of the American Museum of Natural History, c. 1902.

American Museum of Natural History Library, 12633.

This was the conventional manner of exhibiting anthropological as well as natural history material at the turn of the 20th century. Cases filled with specimens, and some with artifacts positioned on top, offered the intrepid visitor hours of education. Franz Boas, curator of ethnography at the American Museum of Natural History from 1895 to 1905, designed the hall so that the casual visitor could learn about the region from introductory cases that presented information on Northwest Coast people and culture. For the more serious student, materials on the individual tribes, from the Coast Salish to the Tlingit, filled row after row of cases. In this photograph, one of the museum's great treasures, a sixty-three-foot canoe collected in 1881, hangs from the ceiling.

set a standard price for these monuments: $1.00 per foot for house posts, $1.50 per foot for grave posts. Eight years later, Harlan Smith traveled to British Columbia to acquire poles for the American Museum of Natural History. In a letter to museum authorities, Smith described how "poles are now practically wiped off the Earth in many localities where they were numerous twelve years ago when I had the buying fever."[3] Even in 1897, relatively few totem poles still stood in Skidegate, which twenty years

before had boasted a spectacular array of these monuments. By the 1920s, few Northwest Coast artworks of any kind remained in their originating communities, for many had left for points south and east.

Throughout the period of contact and settlement, roles and perceptions of the carvings, paintings, weavings, and baskets of the Northwest Coast people underwent several major shifts. In the earliest times they were central to the fabric of groups from the Salish to the Tlingit, reinforcing social order and facilitating connection to the supernatural. After the initial interest of Euroamericans in other cultures, fostered by the Enlightenment and manifested by eighteenth-century collections of "artificial curiosities," reaction to Native art was changed by white settlers' racist and disdainful attitudes—whatever the heathens made was yet another indication of their fundamental barbarism. But soon the Native residents became unthreatening minorities and attitudes shifted slightly. Scientific collecting during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was based on the notion that these people were rapidly disappearing. Tourists found them quaint, and happily purchased souvenirs from them. Most items acquired during this period were placed into natural history museums rather than art museums (fig. 7.15). This was not surprising, given that the anthropologists who studied Native societies worked at natural history museums and approached Native-made objects from scientific rather than artistic perspectives. But the residence in natural history museums of the materials discussed in this book signifies more than their collectors' scientific perspectives, for this went to the core of attitudes toward race. At the turn of the century, many non-Natives believed that only "high" cultures created art, whereas "primitive" people made artifacts that, even if decorated, existed in a completely different—and lesser—realm. In keeping with the prevalent belief that Native people were in some way inferior to civilized whites, it was believed reasonable to exhibit their artistic creations alongside rocks, stuffed animals, and dinosaurs. Only in the twentieth century would these creations enter the rarified world of art.