

THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE TSIMSHIAN INDIANS.

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The Tsimshian Indians form one of the most important stocks of the Northwest. They live in villages on the Nass and Skeena rivers and adjacent islands, and have as neighbors on the north the Tlingits, on the east the Dénés, and on the south the Bella Coolas and Kwakiutls. Their origin and early movements are still a matter of speculation. Their language separates them from the neighboring stocks, but in religion, folk-lore, and culture they have much in common with the Tlingits, Haidas of the Queen Charlotte Islands, and the Kwakiutls. Their physical relationship with these stocks has not been determined, although some anthropometric data has been collected by Dr. Franz Boaz and by myself.

Owing to three chief reasons the life of the Tsimshians, as well as that of other Northwest Indians, has within the last fifty years undergone marked change. These reasons are: (1) The founding and rise of the city of Victoria, on Vancouver Island; (2) the establishment of Hudson's Bay Company's Posts and missionary stations, and (3) the establishment of numerous salmon canneries on the inlets and rivers.

The changes brought about by these causes may also be considered under three heads. First may be mentioned the change of physical status due to mixture with the whites and with other Indians; secondly, the change in culture due to white contact and especially due to the influence of missionaries, and, finally, the change in habitation due to the establishment of Hudson's Bay Company's posts, missionary stations and canneries. It is only with the last change, that of habitation, that we are here concerned.

While on the coast of British Columbia this summer, in the interests of the Field Columbian Museum, I gathered such information as I could relative to this point, and, while fully realizing the imperfection of the data collected, it seems to me to be of sufficient importance to be recorded. My information was obtained from various missionaries and traders, and from the reports of the department of Indian affairs. I am especially indebted, and take this opportunity of expressing my obligation, to the Rev. Mr. Tomlinson of Meamskinisht, a missionary who began his career of usefulness with Duncan at Metlakahla and who is acquainted with the Tsimshian dialects, and has resided in many of the Tsimshian villages on both the Nass and Skeena rivers.