

## **WILLIAM BEYNON AND THE ANTHROPOLOGISTS**

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### **ABSTRACT/RESUME**

William Beynon was a Tsimshian Indian who worked as a field assistant in British Columbia for Franz Boas and Marius Barbeau. The author examines the archival records, including Beynon's letters and field notes, as part of an examination of his extensive work.

William Beynon était un Indien Tsimishian qui travaillait comme au assistant en campagne en Colombie Britannique pour Franz Boas and Marius Barneau. L'auteur examine les registres d'archives, y compris les lettres au Beynon et les notes de campagne d'Amas, faisant patti d'une recherche de son labour intensif.

Many anthropologists have employed native people to collect information from their own or neighbouring groups. On the Northwest Coast, Franz Boas, for example, hired Henry W. Tate, a Tsimshian from Port Simpson, and George Hunt, a Kwagiutl from Fort Rupert, to record the myths of their peoples. These were published as *Tsimshian Mythology* (Boas, 1916), *Kwakiutl Texts I and II* (Boas and Hunt, 1902 and 1905, 1906) and *Contributions to the Ethnology of the Kwakiutl* (Boas, 1925). Boas also employed William Beynon, a Niska, from 1937 to 1939. Beynon had been recommended to Boas by Marius Barbeau of the National Museum of Canada, who had employed Beynon on a sporadic basis since 1916. The information Beynon collected has not yet been published, but has been recently used by several researchers (Halpin, 1973; Cove, 1981; Winter, 1983). The people of New Metlakatla, south Alaska, are undertaking the publication of the manuscripts sent to Boas. These were previously available only in microfilm form from Columbia University. The manuscripts sent to Barbeau, held at the Canadian Centre for Folk-Culture Studies, National Museum of Man, in Ottawa, are being indexed (Cove, n.d.). Once these two projects are completed Beynon's work will be much more readily available. Quotations made from the Columbia and Ottawa manuscripts will be referenced as "Columbia" and "CCFCS" in the notes following this paper. Where available, the notebook or manuscript number and the page reference will be cited.

The use of Beynon's notes by others may present a number of problems. Beynon collected the narratives under specific instructions from Boas and Barbeau. These field instructions included directions as to subject, content, and format. Researchers using his notes must be aware of the constraints under which he worked in order to accurately interpret them.

The study of a phenomenon - be it in anthropology or another discipline - rests on the data used. Data collected in a haphazard manner without proper attention to methodology will be confusing at best, and quite likely misleading. Where the collection of data is done by one who is aware of the methodological problems inherent in the type of data gathering techniques employed, measures can be taken to reduce misleading factors, and increase the validity of the results. Data collected with reference to a specific problem can be tested to verify its reliability in other areas. Where secondary data such as Beynon's notes are used, a researcher must establish the range and degree of their reliability before they can be utilized.

This paper is an attempt to establish this range and degree of reliability for Beynon's notes. I have tried to establish Beynon's field instructions from Boas and Barbeau; any biases that may have entered as a result of their directives and interests; Beynon's own biases and interests; what data he specifically sought, and what he missed or avoided; a profile of the informants he consulted; the quality of his eye-witness accounts; and any biases that may have entered as a result of his position within Coast Tsimshian society.

I will examine the notes from several perspectives. First, a biographical sketch of Beynon will be constructed from the scattered references in the notes and from correspondence between Barbeau, Boas and Beynon. The effect of Beynon's personal history, status, clan affiliation, et cetera, on his understand-

ing of the events he witnessed and the narratives he recorded will be examined. It may be possible to infer from his notes the biases under which he worked. Every researcher chooses to relate a limited amount of data on a limited range of topics. By revealing these, and those aspects Beynon ignored, it may be possible to further reveal his interests and biases.

Beynon's texts will be analysed to determine a social profile of his informants, and the possible implication of his methodology revealed in the types of people he interviewed, and the categories of data he sought or ignored. Biases inherent in Beynon's methodology which are reflected in the data limit the usefulness of his notes to certain subjects. Tests examining the range of completeness, representativity and validity will reveal those areas where Beynon's work can be used with a degree of confidence, and those areas where corroborative data should be sought to confirm his observations. The texts will be studied in an effort to separate the objective facts from the subjective interpretation of those facts. They will be compared both with other narratives in the collection and those published in the literature for evidence of internal consistency and external agreement. Beynon's texts both comment upon and enlarge the body of knowledge written about the Coast Tsimshian. His data will be compared to that collected by Barbeau, Garfield and Tare. If the body of literature already extant on any topic is confirmed, and strengthened in those areas where the literature is known to be trustworthy, we may cautiously assume that the Beynon text under scrutiny has value in shedding light in less well known areas.

## BIOGRAPHY

William Beynon was a Niska chief, of the wolf (laxgibu) phratry. His name, Guscain, is of Tlingit origin, and means "High Cliff". The royal house of Guscain was related through origin and by myth to several Nass groups, as well as the Kitkatla and Kitwankool wolves. The traditional enemies of the house were the ravens.<sup>1</sup> Beynon's maternal uncle, his predecessor, was the chief of all members of the wolf phratry.

Beynon became a prominent member of Coast Tsimshian society, and took an active part in social life and rituals. He, as a chief, was present at most major feasts, and took part in many rituals, giving speeches, making contributions, singing and dancing. His marriage and the assumption of his name were done in the traditional manner. His high status in Coast Tsimshian society may have been in part due to his marriage to a niece of Tsibase, the chief of Kitkatla.

His mother was Tsimshian, his father white. He was born in Victoria. His mother carefully schooled him in his responsibilities as an hereditary chief, and taught him his role in the traditional society. She spoke to him only in her native language, refusing to use English. In 1914 she sent him to Prince Rupert to perform the rituals required after his uncle's death. These death duties were commonly done by the heir who aspired to succeed the deceased chief. Beynon, however, wrote that the "whole custom was entirely new to me"<sup>2</sup>, and that he did not want to succeed to the position of chief. He stated that he refused the

position in favour of an unenfranchised cousin, asserting that, being enfranchised, he (Beynon) was not considered an Indian in the eyes of the Department of Indian Affairs, "having no rights or privileges of Indians under the Government laws",<sup>3</sup> and therefore could not fulfill chiefly obligations. The people did not accept this, however, and apparently "urged me (Beynon) to continue, citing that some of the other tribes were in a similar situation".<sup>4</sup> With professed reluctance Beynon accepted the position, although he did not host the customary Snow Feast at that time. Included in Beynon's notes is a text of a speech given some years later by Joseph Bradley, exhorting Beynon to keep his "rightful position."<sup>5</sup> Bradley was one of Beynon's chief informants. The strong evidence of Beynon's ambivalent identification with Coast Tsimshian society is clear. Beynon claimed to have been taught the traditional customs, yet disavows this knowledge when asked to publicly take up his responsibilities. The event that precipitated Bradley's urging was Beynon's intention to move in to Prince Rupert so that his children might obtain a "better education".

Beynon began to assist Barbeau during Barbeau's first field season on the north coast. Beynon was hired as a field labourer, assistant and translator. Beynon then offered to continue "the same line of work" in Kitkatla on his own, the following winter.<sup>6</sup> Beynon was engaged for a field season that winter, and instructed to "study the outline of the tribe, its geographical position on the map, its former status, hunting grounds, territory, the royal and councilors' families, the individual names and translations, the crests, and the related myths and origins of families and their foreign relatives as well as the former position of the tribe".<sup>7</sup> If he finished gathering that data, Barbeau instructed him to continue with "puberty seclusion, secret societies and their origin, the rituals connected with the gathering of fruits and the first animals or fish caught in the season".<sup>8</sup> Beynon was to record the data in notebooks provided by Barbeau, and would receive twenty-five dollars per notebook. He was instructed to write at least 240 to 250 words per page. There were one hundred pages in each notebook.

Beynon's career as an ethnographer did not have an auspicious beginning. He was shipwrecked for ten days on the way to Kitkatla, losing most of his gear, including seventy of the one hundred dollars advanced to him for informant's fees. In spite of an illness contracted during his exposure, he began collecting data as requested. After less than a month at Kitkatla he wrote to Barbeau requesting more money for informant's fees, which he was by then paying out of his own pocket.<sup>9</sup> In April he sent four notebooks to Barbeau, for which he received \$125.00. In an accompanying letter he wrote, "speaking very candidly I am not going to make anything on this season's work. I must say I had a very unfortunate beginning by being wrecked. But I hope for the best next time."<sup>10</sup> Although Barbeau had indicated that no further work would be possible, due to lack of funds, Beynon used the money sent in payment for the first four books to pay informants to fill the remaining books. He wrote,

"I am sorry that for the time being the work must rest, but with the cheque just received I will be able to gather some material

which I hope will be interesting to you and will forward same to you to be paid for when funds are available for it."<sup>11</sup>

Although such a beginning may have deterred a less persistent person, Beynon recognized the opportunity to improve his income in an economically depressed area during a time of unrest. The war effort curtailed the funds available to Barbeau for ethnographic research. Barbeau had clearly stated that the possibility of future work for Beynon depended upon his success in the first season.<sup>12</sup> Beynon was thus under pressure to produce acceptable work under difficult conditions in his first independent field season.

Beynon was employed by the British Columbia Packers during the summer months that year. During that time he was provided with room and board, but was not paid until the end of the season. He was willing to record narratives for Barbeau during this time from the "natives of the upper Skeena and Kitselas (who) all gather here and stay for the fishing season" as he had "from four to six hours daily spare time (in) which I could work in your interests".<sup>13</sup> He appears to have tried to exploit every opportunity available to him to improve his income.

Barbeau mentioned this in a letter of reference sent to Franz Boas. Barbeau praised Beynon as being "a valuable assistant and clever and intelligent..., with a great deal of sound knowledge about Tsimshian acquired through our work and subsequent independent observation", but cautioned Boas about Beynon's tendency to "take money where ever he finds it and not bother about retribution if he could help it", specifically mentioning Beynon's willingness to sell both objects and narratives twice, and his affinity for alcohol. Barbeau did, however, recommend "that Beynon should be provided with a further opportunity for useful work, as he can undoubtedly do it well", as Barbeau had no funds to "provide him with some remuneration which he needs so badly."<sup>14</sup> The reference to Beynon's sound knowledge of Tsimshian may indicate that Boas specifically asked about Beynon's ability in the Tsimshian language, and was intending to use his expertise primarily for the collection of linguistic data.

Beynon's health does not appear to have been good. He often notes that he was prevented from working, either for Barbeau, Boas, or B.C. Packers, by ill-health. He was hospitalized in Prince Rupert and Victoria several times, and died at a relatively young age. This, with the responsibility of a family, could easily have created financial difficulties.

Beynon continued to work for Barbeau, as funds were available, until Beynon's death in 1958. He recorded maps, house lists, myths, eye witness accounts of feasts, rituals, raids and narratives on many other topics. Each narrative was recorded in Tsimshian, and literally translated. Beynon then added a free translation. These interlinear texts were used by Barbeau and Boas in their studies of language, as well as being kept as an ethnographic record. Beynon footnoted the texts with many explanations of detail. He stated on one occasion that he "had quite a time impressing on the informants that what I wanted was the speeches and as much of the olden form of speech as they could give".<sup>15</sup> Boas had apparently instructed him to gather material that would be useful in

studying the "olden form of speech" or formal speech. Boas' questions to Beynon usually dealt with language. Boas selected words from the texts and sent them back to Beynon for more complete translations, definitions and comments. This emphasis on language was apparently a primary focus of the data collection. The use of the texts by others as a data source on other aspects of Tsimshian life must therefore be guarded. If the original central concern was linguistic accuracy, the accuracy of the texts in other areas may have been compromised.

Apart from Beynon's employment record as an ethnographer, the facts of his biography are known only from scattered references in the notes and a few letters. While the entire biography, as reconstructed, may have been skewed by the subjectivity of the source, Beynon appears to have been fairly consistent throughout the period. None of the events he relates are obviously false, or internally inconsistent, or contradict what is known of the social context in which he lived. The level of detail he provided supports the historicity of the eyewitness records. In reading between the lines, however, one is impressed by the ambivalent position he occupied. He was a Niska, head of the Coast Tsimshian wolf clan; apparently trained to lead, yet doing so only under pressure; he professed not to believe in the efficacy of many rituals, yet he actively learnt and participated in them; he was a student of Coast Tsimshian culture for his own interest, yet sold this information to anthropologists; he was of mixed parentage, educated in Victoria, and concerned that his children had a 'good education', that is an education at a mission school. For these reasons any parts of his narratives that give his views on native-white relations, or Beynon's own position in Coast Tsimshian society, should be carefully examined before deductions based on the texts are made.

## ANALYSIS OF THE TEXTS

The sample of Beynon's work selected for statistical analysis below consists of all Beynon's texts recorded between 1937 and 1959, for Boas. These texts were selected for statistical testing because they represent a total sample of Beynon's work from a known period of time. A complete sample from a known period is not possible for the books sent to Barbeau as Barbeau removed the pages from the books and cut them into sections, each filed by subject.

In the Boas collection are 256 narratives collected from 72 informants, as well as eyewitness accounts written from Beynon's personal experience. Beynon used three primary informants from whom he collected more than ten narratives, and a larger number from whom he elicited only one or two narratives. He relied on three informants to provide him with nearly twenty-five per cent of his data. These were Mark Luther (age 77, status not given), Joseph Bradley (age 90, chief), and Ethel Musgrave (elderly, chief). Of the twenty-four informants who provided him with nearly ninety per cent of his data, seven were chiefs, and between seven and eleven were councilors. Eighty-three per cent of his informants were men, and all of his female informants were of high status and/or elderly.

Beynon records the population of Kitkatla as 250. Of these, he interviewed 72. He seems to have concentrated on interviewing elderly male chiefs, but did interview women and younger men. He seems to have chosen the women by the same criteria he used to select his male informants, that is, those who were elderly, and of high status. The bias toward high status may have been a result of Coast Tsimshian social organization. It is possible that there were but a few knowledgeable adults who were not of high status.<sup>16</sup>

Beynon also chose those who had been personally involved in the events recorded, or who belonged to the House owning the myth, and thus had the right to repeat it. He recorded descriptions of secret society initiations from initiates, accounts of raids from participants or their heirs, and descriptions of feasts and other rituals from eyewitnesses and participants wherever possible.

The clan and tribe affiliation of Beynon's informants is interesting. The data is recorded for 56 of the 72 informants. The Coast Tsimshian Gispewudweda are the most numerous. As Beynon's narratives for this period were nearly all collected in Kitkatla, the Coast Tsimshian emphasis is understandable. Of the ten non-Coast Tsimshian recorded, one was Niska, five were Gitksan, three Haida and one Tlingit. Evidence seems to indicate that Beynon developed the contacts he had made previously while working for Barbeau. This is particularly indicated in the narratives by Isaac Tens, a chief from Gitanmeks, who was one of Barbeau's primary informants on Gitksan shamanism. Other non-Coast Tsimshian who figure in Barbeau's field notes appear again in Beynon's. Beynon appears to have used non-Coast Tsimshian informants to record data from their specific point of view; thus a Niska describes the "Snow Feast", a feast unique to the Niska; a Gitksan repeats the Temla'am origin myths and Gitksan versions of Legex's raids; and the Haida and Tlingit describe customs and myths known only to them. Thus, in using non-Coast Tsimshian informants, Beynon appeared to choose those people who could shed light on a topic from another point of view, or who had specialized knowledge of a specific topic that he could not elicit from Coast Tsimshian people.

Beynon was restricted to interviewing those non-Coast Tsimshian who were available to be interviewed in Coast Tsimshian territory. The Haida and Tlingit informants were all men, and were interviewed in Prince Rupert. Thus, those who had no reason to travel to Prince Rupert would not have been interviewed. The Tlingit informant was a lawyer, and the Haidas were all men who were involved in political organizations and unions.

Of the 46 recorded Coast Tsimshian informants, Beynon recorded the clan affiliation of 33: Gispewudweda 15, Ganhada 7, Laxgibu 6 and Laxsik 5. At first glance the over-representations of the Gispewudweda appears unusual. Beynon was a Laxgibu chief, therefore one would expect the majority of his informants would also be Laxgibu. Beynon was a chief, but was from outside the community. His wife was a Gispewudweda, of chiefly status in the house of Tsibase, being Tsibase's niece. Beynon appears to have used the kin network available to him as a spouse of an important member of the highest status house in Kitkatla.

Occasionally it is quite easy to impute a motive to the informant's willingness to give a narrative to Beynon. For example, one Columbia manuscript

"gives the lowering of the prestige of a royal house and the humiliating of a famous warrior" (title) who "stood high in rank and was almost the equal in power of Dzihase".<sup>17</sup> The informant was Joshua Tsihase (Dzihase), the rival. Here the informant stood to gain status by recounting the humiliation of a near rival. In other cases the evidence is not as clear, but the simple telling of an origin myth, or a raid in which the informant's house was successful, raised the prestige of the house. In a rank and status conscious society the informants stood to gain by using Beynon's inquisitiveness.

Beynon appears to have exercised a degree of critical caution while collecting the narratives. He questioned informants when he noticed irregularities in their accounts. He compared the narratives with his own experience and with narratives gathered previously. He often drew Boas' attention to similarities in the text at hand and those collected by Garfield, or, more often, Boas' own published material. He appears to have carried Boas' *Tsimshian Mythology* with him.

Beynon often used more than one informant per narrative. In one case he refers to recording "the myth from six or seven older informants."<sup>18</sup> He regularly questioned informants about details in the narratives, listing their answers in the footnotes. He occasionally gave background data on the informant, particularly where they appeared to be biased. He indicated, for example, which informants had been active in the church, and in what capacity. He refrained from commenting on their degree of bias, leaving that to Boas' judgment, but was aware of this source of misinformation.

Beynon occasionally cited William Duncan as a corroborating source on translations, but wrote that these translations were not 'affirmed'. Apparently Beynon checked all his translations with another, this person either 'affirming' or correcting them. Beynon wrote that he deliberately refrained from interviewing a shaman early in his field season, as "He was a good informant and I purposely kept him for the last for corroboration work."

Beynon regularly clarified various detailed controversies and points of interest brought up in the narratives. He provided knowledgeable commentary, assisting the reader in understanding the intricacies of Coast Tsimshian social organization, status and ranking disputes, and ritual activities.

Beynon instructed his informants to "reconstruct as much as possible from what they knew of it (in this case, a feud) and also what they had learned of it from all sources".<sup>19</sup> This may account for some of the inconsistencies and minor inaccuracies evident in some of the historical narratives. A synthetic account is quite different from that gathered from one source.

Beynon sometimes used rather unorthodox means to obtain data. When a shaman interfered with his field work, Beynon pretended to report the shaman to the Indian Agent. As the shaman was under a suspended sentence at the time, and was forbidden to practise shamanic rituals as part of his sentence, this report should have resulted in a jail sentence. The threat was effective, and Beynon found that the shaman co-operated on subsequent occasions. His insight into inter-cultural relations, and his place in both societies allowed him to use each to his advantage. He could use his high status to obtain information, exploit his



position as an intermediary, and take advantage of feigned ignorance in certain practises. The shaman mentioned above attempted to harm Beynon before they resolved their differences. The shaman concluded that he was unable to influence Beynon as he had "too much white blood and white man's ways".<sup>20</sup> Beynon's primary goal was to complete his work, and in service of this end he used whatever methods he could.

Beynon exploited his position as an intermediary between native society, beliefs and ways of life, and the world of the Indian Agent, missionary and anthropologist. In demonstrating his separateness from native society he may have compromised his credibility among his informants. He used this degree of detachment, combined with an intimate knowledge of Coast Tsimshian society to his own advantage in interview situations. He commanded a presence which allowed him to actively direct the interview, providing him with a more detailed narrative than may have otherwise been possible. The narratives collected by Barbeau were more evidently directed by the informant who controlled the interview situation.

In his review of Boas' *Tsimshian Mythology*, Barbeau discussed the use of myth and folk-tales to illustrate the history of a people. He, following Boas, distinguished between cosmogonic, aetiological and hero myths, and folk-tales. Barbeau distinguished the "myths of origin of a clan, a crest, or the power of a chief" as being "more pregnant with local traits and mentality, notwithstanding their conventional and traditional plots". He criticized Boas' collection of myths, stating that he should have included a greater variety of narratives as "an ethnographic sketch based on a large mass of many sided narratives bearing on the history of the tribe would no doubt be realistic." (1917:552).

Perhaps as a habit developed under Barbeau's direction, Beynon recorded a wide variety of narratives. As well as the types listed by Barbeau, he collected moral tales, descriptions of rituals, explanations of ranking, details of social conventions, and accounts of raids and migrations for Boas. Table One outlines the content of the narratives collected by Beynon for Boas. He appears to cover the material sent to Boas by Tate, with several additions. Perhaps Boas instructed Beynon to collect narratives on a greater variety of subjects as a result of Barbeau's review.

Table One lists the variety of subject matter found in Beynon's narratives. The narratives he collected for Boas are grouped by subject and shown as a percentage of the total corpus in the left column. As previously noted, Beynon used a small number of people as primary informants, gathering many narratives from these people and eliciting a smaller number of narratives from each of a larger group of people.

The subject matter of the narratives tends to follow the division between primary informants and those from whom he did not elicit many narratives. That is, for example, as shown in Table One, he collected histories of wars, raids and disputes, personal histories and descriptions of power demonstrations from primary informants.

Other types of narratives were collected from a larger number of people. For example, Beynon collected house myths from a larger number than other

TABLE 1: Subject Matter of Beynon Manuscripts

Type of Narrative	Percentage of total corpus	Narratives per informant
House/crest myths	5	5
Wars, raids, disputes	19	13
personal histories, including Legex	7	12
Events	9	7
Moral Stories	5	1
Descriptions of rituals	27 (total)	7
power demonstrations	6	11
potlatches	4	3
shamanism/witchcraft	7	8
secret societies	6	6
initiations	4	4

types of narratives. These people tended to give fewer narratives per person than those giving other types. This could be attributed to Beynon's tendency to elicit house myths from house members and descriptions of wars, raids, disputes, historic events and rituals from witnesses and participants. House myths were related by house members. Beynon had been instructed to collect these myths for each house by each house, as this would greatly increase the number of informants.

While Beynon may have collected a broader range of narratives than Tate, he generally limited his scope to the distinct types mentioned in the table. His strong emphasis on ritual, myth, social organization and historic events excluded many other types of data. He did not, for example, collect large amounts of data on subsistence activities, non-ceremonial art and material culture, architecture, land tenure systems, population and settlement patterns, recreational activities, early contact and culture change, non-ceremonial exchange systems, and a host of other topics. The use of his data by others in these areas will be limited.

Beynon's narratives expand on the literature on Coast Tsimshian myth, ritual, social organization and historical events. In many cases his facts are confirmed in other sources such as Garfield (1939). The histories he records are the personal accounts and reminiscences of participants or their relatives, or oral histories and traditions. These contain the inconsistencies typical to the genre. Given the limitations of his data sources, and used within the context of these media, his accounts shed more light on the known history of the Coast Tsimshian.

In some areas Beynon's notes contain assertions which seem to contradict the published literature. An example is one of the definitions of a power or

supernatural being (*naxnox*). Beynon quotes: A power "always originated in some hunting territory or fishing or berry territory, thus giving the owner of the *naxnox* these territories as their own exclusive property".<sup>21</sup> The word *naxnox* was used in a variety of contexts and meanings in Beynon's notes. Some of these references are ambiguous. *Naxnox* names are associated with hunting territories, but the linking of *naxnox* with the land in this way is quite unusual.<sup>22</sup> The term was used to refer to a variety of concepts and objects, from supernatural powers to amulets. In this narrative, a reading which understood crests linked to hunting territories as symbolic expressions of supernatural powers (*naxnox*), would be more acceptable. This is not a distortion of the original text, but rather an attempt to recover part of the rich detail of Coast Tsimshian thought and cosmology that has been lost in the reduction of the living cultural expressions witnessed by Beynon to the written medium.

On examination of Beynon's narratives, and comparison of them with narratives collected by others, the reader is immediately struck by his apparent objectivity. Beynon never indulged in a highly emotional account of an event. Some of the events he witnessed and described (such as dramatizations) were very forceful. Their theatric strength is evident from the narrative, but a highly emotional subjective response to the event is not. Where Beynon did provide a personal commentary or explanation he usually placed it in a footnote. He occasionally included an interpretive gloss in the narrative, noted this, and was careful to provide documentation for his interpretation. In one description of a ritual, he commented on the varying levels of acculturation and types of responses to the ritual by the different age groups.<sup>23</sup> He carefully footnoted this comment with an almost apologetic note explaining his interest.

## CONCLUSION

The data collected by Beynon has been demonstrated to be, on the whole, fairly representative and trustworthy, but use of the data should be subject to several constraints. Beynon has been shown to have occupied an intermediary position between Coast Tsimshian and white society. This, a result of his personal history, cautions against the use of his texts as sole or primary support for deductions involving inter-racial relations. The primary focus of his field work was linguistic data collection, with secondary emphases in ritual, myth, histories and social organization. In these areas one may accept his testimony as being as accurate as possible within the constraints of his method of data collection. His sole use of interview and eyewitness description, backed by corroboration from another informant and repeated descriptions of similar events, somewhat limits the applicability and range of extrapolation within which one can use the data. Other methods of data collection may be used to test his data.

Beynon's contribution to the documentation of the Coast Tsimshian culture during the early years of this century is tremendous. His careful observation, the detailed recording of the events he witnessed and the narratives he elicited, have allowed others to appreciate the depth and complexity of Coast Tsimshian

thought and custom. The anticipated increased use of his work following their cataloguing and publication will further this awareness. His notes must, however, be used with a knowledge of their weaknesses and limitations as well as their strengths.

#### NOTES

1. Columbia 92: note 1.
2. Columbia 212.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Columbia 252:53-56.
6. CCFCS letter: Beynon to Barbeau, November 19, 1915.
7. CCFCS letter: Barbeau to Beynon, December 13, 1915.
8. Ibid.
9. CCFCS letter: Beynon to Barbeau, February 18, 1916.
10. CCFCS letter: Beynon to Barbeau, April 8, 1916.
11. CCFCS letter: Beynon to Barbeau, May 4, 1916.
12. CCFCS letter: Barbeau to Beynon, December 13, 1915.
13. CCFCS letter: Beynon to Barbeau, May 1, 1916.
14. CCFCS letter: Barbeau to Boas, December 4, 1933.
15. Columbia letter: Beynon to Boas, September 11, 1939.
16. John Cove, personal communication.
17. Columbia 7.
18. Columbia 131: note 2.
19. Columbia, notebook for 1939, no pagination.
20. CCFCS 1916.

21. Columbia 185:22.
22. John Cove, personal communication.
23. CCFCS 1945.

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William Beynon's grandfather Arthur Wellington Clah appears at the very left of the backmost seated row in this photo from Metlakatla, B.C., in the 1880s. Standing at the back are William Duncan and the Rev. Robert Tomlinson. I believe the man sitting next to Clah is Paul Legaic, but I am not sure. Clah taught Duncan the Tsimshian language and helped develop its first writing system. William Beynon. 13 May 2010 · The cover of Marius Barbeau's "Tsimshian Myths," published in 1961, three years after Beynon's death. Anthropology - Anthropology - History of anthropology: The modern discourse of anthropology crystallized in the 1860s, fired by advances in biology, philology, and prehistoric archaeology. In *The Origin of Species* (1859), Charles Darwin affirmed that all forms of life share a common ancestry. Fossils began to be reliably associated with particular geologic strata, and fossils of recent human ancestors were discovered, most famously the first Neanderthal specimen, unearthed in 1856. Thank you for your feedback. Our editors will review what you've submitted and determine whether to revise the article. Join Britannica's Publishing Partner Program and our community of experts to gain a global audience for your work! Share.