

been deserted on 25 April 1848, and of the deaths of nine officers and 15 men to that date, most notably that of Franklin himself on 11 June 1847. The document was stained by rust from the tin canister. Smith (p. 120) quotes McClintock's (1859:288) poignant comment: "So sad a tale was never told in fewer words."

Upon Franklin's death, Crozier finally assumed command. Sadly, Crozier led his men in a hopeless direction, south toward the mouth of the Great Fish (Back) River and away from possible search vessels to the east and north. Their skeletons, some of which lay for a century scattered along the shores of King William Island, offered mute testimony to their desperate plight.

The final chapter deals with the lasting memorials to Crozier, especially the imposing statue in Banbridge and the commemorative plaque in the nearby parish church. In addition to Cape Crozier in the Antarctic, it describes seven other geographic features named for Crozier, six of them in the North American Arctic and one in Spitsbergen. But perhaps most impressive is the 14-mile-wide crater on the moon, located near other moonscape features named for celebrated Arctic explorers Cook, Parry, Ross, Nansen, Amundsen, Scott, and Shackleton.

Smith has researched the history of Crozier and his family. He tells interesting stories, especially about Crozier's infatuation with Lady Franklin's niece and companion, Sophy Cracroft, whom Crozier came to admire during two long stays with the Franklins at Hobart, Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania), while en route to and from the Antarctic. Clearly Crozier was smitten, and he was probably Sophy's most distinguished suitor, although Sophy, "an incorrigible flirt," had set her sights on the already engaged senior officer, James Ross. Ross married his young fiancée, Ann Coulman, less than four weeks after his return from Antarctica, with Crozier acting as best man. Sophy, still unmarried in spite of Crozier's repeated entreaties, returned to London as the constant companion of Lady Franklin. After Lady Franklin's death in 1875, Sophy sorted her voluminous papers for posterity.

Crozier has long merited a full-length biography. The chapter headings are well chosen, the maps well done, and the dust cover attractive. The index seems complete, but misspells "Scoresby", as does the text on p. 151. In the Falkland Islands, on the return from Antarctica, Smith tells us that the men were unhappy to learn, via the lieutenant governor there, that Crozier was the only officer to have received promotion. However, Rear Admiral M.J. Ross, the great-grandson of James Ross, tells us in *Polar Pioneers* (1994:243) that the lieutenant governor instead told of promotions of four officers, not of Crozier alone as Smith states on page 120. An incomplete statement by Smith on p. 52 links "Franklin and Richardson" rather than "Franklin and Back" as the party that penetrated along the northern coast of Alaska to within 160 miles of Captain Beechey's concurrent expedition approaching from the west in 1826. Richardson at that moment was successfully exploring the Arctic coast from the Mackenzie to the Coppermine. There

are minor omissions. Smith fails to explain that both the north magnetic pole, discovered by James Clark Ross in 1831, and the southern magnetic pole are slowly but constantly moving over large distances. Nor are we told that Ross Island is now the home of the largest research station in Antarctica (McMurdo, named for Archibald McMurdo, Crozier's first lieutenant on the *Terror*).

Smith deserves credit for producing an attractive, readable, and informative book, even though the second part of its title is overly speculative and highly improbable.

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EMPIRE'S EDGE: AMERICAN SOCIETY IN NOME, ALASKA 1898–1934. By PRESTON JONES. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2006. ISBN-13: 978-1-889963-89-1. x + 158 p., map, b&w illus., notes, bib., index. Softbound. US\$19.95.

People know about Nome, Alaska, today because of two practically iconic historical events. The first was the discovery of gold in the sandy beaches of western Alaska in 1899. The second was the heroic run of sled teams from Nenana to Nome in 1925: despite fierce blizzard conditions, the sleds arrived with serum in time to halt a threatening diphtheria epidemic (inspiring, of course, the Iditarod sled dog race). But if readers are expecting tales of rugged gold miners, devious con men, risqué can-can girls, and Balto in this study of early 20th-century Nome, then they will be disappointed.

The portrait of Nome life in *Empire's Edge: American Society in Nome, Alaska 1898–1934*, by historian Preston Jones, begins with the 1898–99 gold strikes and ends with the great fire of 1934. In describing a town that Alaskans believe was built upon "golden beaches," Jones intentionally avoids the romance of boomtown lore. Instead, he attempts to show that Nome was an ordinary American town, founded by ordinary people, who were making their way in an unfamiliar environment. In fact, Jones argues that "if that lust [for gold] had not been subdued in Nome, the city probably would not have survived" (p. 1).

Jones supports his self-described "town history" with details garnered from local newspapers, which he refers to as "a town's diaries" (p. viii). He points out that the court, municipal, and business records that might have aided his research unfortunately burned up in Nome's 1934 fire (p. ix). To show just how residents displayed qualities of

“American-ness,” the author has written multilayered, thematic chapters that discuss an array of topics from “war” and “women” to “daily life” and “dogs.” Such thematic organization may remind readers of another study of an Alaskan town, Robert Marshall’s (1991) classic, *Arctic Village*. Like Marshall’s categorical descriptions of Wiseman’s inhabitants, the topics discussed in *Empire’s Edge* are meant to serve as windows into the life of early Nome society.

As implied in the title, *Empire’s Edge* follows the tradition of historians such as William Appleman Williams (1969), Walter LaFeber (1963), and Howard I. Kushner (1975), who argue that 19th-century politicians and businessmen viewed the annexation of Alaska as necessary for the expansion of American trade and influence into Asia, and eventually, beyond. Likewise, Jones places Nome’s history within the context of U.S. expansion, for much of his study reveals how Nomeites saw and spoke about themselves just as the United States was becoming an imperial power.

Still, *Empire’s Edge* is less concerned with empire building than with the small American town established on the empire’s northern fringe. In that regard, Jones is following a scholarly trail blazed by historian Stephen Haycox (2002a, b), whose numerous studies have challenged Alaska’s frontier narrative of exceptionality and independence by claiming not only that Alaska is dependent upon the lower 48, but that Starbucks-drinking, Nordstrom-buying American urbanites have remade Alaska’s cultural and economic landscape into their own image.

Similarly, in *Empire’s Edge*, Jones suggests that most of Nome’s early pioneers were neither exotic nor exceptional. Few of Nome’s gold miners found their mother lode, and even fewer Nomeites were dazzling bargirls, hard-drinking gunslingers, and husky con artists. Instead, Jones contends that most of Nome’s residents were products of early 20th-century American norms. Nomeites were both capitalists and socialists: some believed that the business of government was business, while others accepted the increase of federal regulations. Some Nomeites were racists, who justified their actions with rationales such as “the white man’s burden” and social Darwinism, but others were progressively tolerant and open-minded. Nomeites saw themselves on the cutting edge of the American empire, not at its fringe. Living closer to Russia than to Washington, D.C., they looked outward to the Pacific with grandiose dreams, and simultaneously, they looked inward, paying attention to community and helping their neighbors in times of real calamity. Indeed, Jones may suggest that these American pioneers were ordinary people, and the town that they forged was a replica of middle America, but, as the author points out, this in itself was a remarkable, if not, exceptional feat: “There are few cities that merit scholarly books about them simply because they exist,” writes Jones. “Nome does deserve such a book” (p. 2).

Still, there are a few missed opportunities in *Empire’s Edge*. Jones convincingly makes it clear that these early Nomeites were ordinary Americans who achieved something extraordinary. As Jones put it, “They built an easily

recognizable American community in a most uncommon environment” (p. 1). However, *Empire’s Edge* fails to provide readers with a clear understanding of the relationship forged between Nomeites and the so-called “uncommon environment.” If carving out a permanent, recognizable settlement in such a hostile and foreign land was indeed exceptional, then would it not make sense to discuss nature’s place in Nome’s past? *Empire’s Edge* lacks discussions on the flora and fauna or any of the geological and natural features that surround Nome, and Jones says very little about how Nomeites perceived the Arctic environment that they called home. Had Jones examined the intertwining stories of Nomeite and nature, then perhaps readers might better appreciate the relevance and consequences of the natural disasters that struck Nome, or activities such as “reindeer herding” or “building roads and the harbor,” or even “becoming Alaskan.”

The topical format employed by Jones also seems to merely chronicle aspects of Nome life, rather than telling a comprehensive story. A story or narrative is essential for a reader to evaluate the relative significance of events, and ultimately, to draw meaning from them (Cronon, 1992). Because *Empire’s Edge* lacks analytical narration, it is very difficult for readers to care about Nome’s successes and failures, identify with their activities, or come away with lessons learned. Ironically, readers never empathize with the central players—the Nomeites.

Jones states that his study “provides readers a more complete picture of an early twentieth-century Alaskan city than has been available until now” (p. 2), but a few problems remain nonetheless. *Empire’s Edge* omits methods employed by environmental historians that might have made this study stronger. Furthermore, Jones may justifiably refuse to hide his admiration for Nome’s inhabitants, but without a structured narrative, *Empire’s Edge* ultimately clouds the historical meaning and value of forging an American town in unfamiliar Alaska. On the other hand, the book’s strongest attribute is the author’s total avoidance of Nome’s more “sexy topics” and his complete dedication to Nome’s ordinary life. Indeed, *Empire’s Edge* does provide readers with topical insights that reveal Nome’s early 20th century “American-ness” and makes an important contribution to the growing field of Alaskan history.

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DO GLACIERS LISTEN? LOCAL KNOWLEDGE, COLONIAL ENCOUNTERS, AND SOCIAL IMAGINATION. By JULIE CRUIKSHANK. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005. ISBN 0-7748-1187-0 (paper). xii + 312 p., maps, b&w illus., notes, bib., index. Softbound. Cdn\$29.95.

For a region that is generally less considered than other northern places, the ethnological literature on Dene societies of the Yukon, interior Alaska and Mackenzie Valley is staggering: it includes works by McClellan, Nadasdy, and the present author on the southwest Yukon, and those of Helm, VanStone, McFayden-Clark, Balikci, Asch, Dennison, Jarvenpa and Gillespie on neighboring Dene groups. Within this body, the work of McClellan (1975), Cruikshank (1979, 1990, 1998), and Cruikshank et al. (1990) on Southern Tutchone culture history and knowledge is special. *Do Glaciers Listen?* is an outstanding contribution to this overall literature, but especially to the Southern Tutchone component.

Cruikshank presents the reader with several occasionally overlapping narratives, which come from Dene elders, European and American travelers, and modern mapmakers, about the glaciers and ice fields that define this corner of the Western Subarctic. Through these “intersecting narratives of locality,” we are informed about the intimate relationship between these most dominating physical features and the First Nations of the interior and coast whom the ice and transecting rivers connected. We learn of the dread (and sometimes pleasure) these features inspired in outsiders, and, finally, of their “role” in making First Nations peoples British Columbians, Yukoners, and Alaskans, Canadians or Americans. The Kluane-St. Elias area is revealed, in turn, as a social and cultural space, an obstacle to commerce and colonization, and a political divide. In revealing all the ways the area is “known,” the narratives ultimately illustrate just how different the various perceptions and understandings of that place are.

In presenting the various narratives of place, Cruikshank also develops two important themes. The first is about colonialism and the framing of history. Most engaging is

the evolution of Edward Grave and the “story” of his transformative experience, first as a commercial agent in the Belgian Congo, committed to that place’s “owner” and the good intentions of the colonial enterprise; then as an adventurer-traveler into the Alsek-Tatshenshini drainage, where he displayed considerable disdain for the Tlingit and Dene with whom he came into contact and their knowledge and proscriptions about glaciers; and finally, on his return to the Congo, as a man who had lost his illusions about the practice of colonialism. Whether Grave was a model for Kurtz, or Marlow, or had any influence on Conrad is not an argument that I would take up, but at the very least, Grave well illustrates that globalization, at least as a kind of attitude, predated our era.

Of most interest to me is Cruikshank’s presentation of traditional knowledge (TK), which is a main thread throughout this work. She and the women whose knowledge underpins the First Nations narrative are neither didactic nor polemical, avoiding the comparison-contrast with science that is often a main part of discussions on TK. I am equally appreciative that Cruikshank does not reduce what Annie Ned, Angela Sidney, and Kitty Smith say to glaciological and climatological facts.

What she makes evident is that traditional knowledge is about a worldview that, as it pertains here, involves a participatory inclusiveness that empowers glaciers—and ravens, bears, or salmon—as well as humans. I have no doubt that Little Ice Age Tutchone and Tlingit felt as much trepidation and exhilaration on their crossings of these glaciers as did Schwatka, Grace, or Muir, but I doubt that those earlier travelers felt conquest. Glaciers were as much to be communicated with as they were to be overcome. There is nothing romantic or Rousseauian in this; it is simply fundamental to the sharing of the world by glaciers and people.

My introduction to the North involved the Southwest Yukon and “Proto-Dene” archaeology. I have often thought about how formative that experience was, although I chose a path to other places. As amazing as the archaeology and the country were, I only now realize the real depth of Dene Culture. Dr. Cruikshank has produced a work that should be important not only to students of culture history in the Pacific Northwest, but also to all who grapple with the cultural complexities of traditional knowledge.

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