

the gendered nature of divisions of labor across space and through time will become more circumspect, more empirically and ethnographically grounded, and more carefully reasoned. This volume is a great role model in that regard.

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A LAND GONE LONESOME. By DAN O'NEILL. New York: Counterpoint Press, 2006. ISBN 1-5823-344-5. 245 p., maps, afterword, index. Hardbound. US\$24.95; Cdn\$32.95.

Superficially, this is a composite of several canoe trips the author made in different years between Dawson City, Yukon, and Circle City, Alaska. Each trip contributed to an account that lingers vividly over places, people, and events (prehistoric, historic, and contemporary) along this section of the Yukon River.

At a deeper level, O'Neill's sweeps through space and time can impress readers in several ways. Some will be impressed with the improbable suite of tectonic, glacial, and erosion events that gave rise to one of the world's great rivers (p. 23–25). Others will marvel at how many different explorers contributed pieces to the geographic puzzle formed by dendritic tributaries to the Yukon River between 1778 and 1883 (from James Cook, p. 14, to Frederick Schwatka, p. 31). Yet others will note the subtle yet significant differences between the public policies of two

nations and their respective territorial governments toward the contiguous land and river systems coursing through this U.S.-Canada boundary region ("Canadians have an impressive knack for 'stick handling' around dicey problems" [p. 44]).

A Land Gone Lonesome is peopled with characters of near-legendary dimensions. The menu includes the Liken brothers of the Prohibition era (1920–33) in the United States and the legacy of their Sourtoe Cocktail in Dawson City (p. 2–3), ill-fated Dick Cook of Eagle country (p. 92–117), and Joe Vogler's astonishing rise and fall as a maverick miner and politician in Alaska (p. 202–220). Readers unfamiliar with the region might entertain momentary doubts as to whether these were real or fictional figures.

Not far into this book you begin to sense that something irreplaceable has vanished from this country, although the author does not rush readers into defining that something. Percy DeWolfe, for example, spent 35 years delivering the mail between Dawson and Eagle, back and forth, summer and winter, from 1915 through 1950. It took a letter about four days to make the 100-mile trip either way by dogteam or riverboat. After the U.S. and Canadian postal systems replaced Percy's surface delivery system with airplanes in 1951, that 100-mile, 4-day trip turned into a 3000-mile odyssey through Whitehorse, Vancouver, Seattle, and back north via Anchorage and Fairbanks. Now, although it is moved by high-flying aircraft that reach more than half the speed of sound, a letter sent from Dawson to Eagle spends 10 days in transit, and often longer.

Historically, some people could travel and live quite comfortably throughout this region. Of course others, such as prospectors, endured nearly unimaginable hardships. The contrast between comfort and hardship can be startling. After the purchase of Alaska from Imperial Russia in 1867, an 88-year reign of sternwheelers plying the Yukon River ensued, during which passengers expected various degrees of luxury. Roadhouses punctuated the river traveler's routes at regular intervals, especially after the Klondike Gold Discovery of 1896. After a strenuous winter day's travel by dogsled, the mail carrier and other wayfarers could rely on comfortable lodgings and hot meals throughout this land. For the comfortable folks of the early 20th century, it would have been unthinkable to take strenuous canoe trips like those the author took half a century after the last of the Yukon sternwheelers was beached in 1955.

At its deepest—and perhaps most deeply troubling—level, *A Land Gone Lonesome* needs to be understood as the *encore* to John McPhee's (1977) book, *Coming into the Country*. McPhee examined events and people in Alaska at a watershed in the state's historical development. The Trans-Alaska (oil) pipeline was under construction while McPhee traveled the state. More relevant to O'Neill's contribution, however, the second stage of the land distribution foreseen in the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act was taking place in the form of selection of lands

to be administered as preserves and parks after the enactment of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA–1980). The title essay in McPhee’s book concerned this upper Yukon River country and its inhabitants between Eagle and Circle City. McPhee portrayed a stream of zealous latter-day pioneers who had set their sights on getting away from the apron strings of urban life. These were a heterogeneous lot of refugees, disenchanted with cash economies, determined to live directly from the land in the 1960s and 1970s. A number of these people funneled through Eagle, where they were variously encouraged or discouraged from their aim of establishing themselves as trappers, fishers, and hunters. McPhee marveled at the pluck of these folks and described Dick Cook as the “acknowledged high swami of the river people” (McPhee, 1977:404). Within a year after McPhee’s book was published, most of the land between Eagle and Circle had been selected for the Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve. Jurisdiction over this land was transferred after 1980 from the Bureau of Land Management to the National Park Service.

Dan O’Neill follows the fates of some people John McPhee introduced three decades ago in *Coming into the Country* (1977). His chronicle adds more recent arrivals, however, and explores more than the fates of his and McPhee’s arrivals. *A Land Gone Lonesome* also traces the capital amassed by individuals and small family groups while they acquired the skills that allowed them to subsist in this country. That capital scarcely counted as monetary wealth, but rather consisted of histories, know-how, and the cabins these latter-day pioneers built during their tenancy on the land. As a cabin-builder himself, Dan O’Neill has an appraising eye for dwellings and other buildings left by former inhabitants.

Much of this book details the emptying of the Upper Yukon country of people, except for those living in the road-connected communities of Dawson City, Eagle, and Circle City. In 1900, an estimated 500 to 1000 people lived between Eagle and Circle. By 1973, a formal survey estimated that the human population between Eagle and Circle consisted of 16 year-round residents. In 1977 a count of residents found 28 people, including children (p. 136). In all, during the two decades between 1970 and 1990, O’Neill could identify 80 individuals comprising 35 households who had lived outside organized, road-connected communities between the Canada-Alaska border and Circle. By 2005, the number of families permitted to continue living within the Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve had dropped to zero (p. 233).

According to the author’s assessment, driving people off the land and selective destruction of historic buildings throughout the roadless stretches of the Yukon River valley have been policy elements adopted and executed by the National Park Service. O’Neill examines the costs of breaking the historical and subsistence connections of people to these lands and resources. The value invested in lands by the dimension of human experiences of them is

forever lost. This lament for what has been banished as the result of giving stewardship over public lands in the Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve to the National Park Service is an arresting analysis. People like me, who tend to believe that preserving or recreating wilderness is axiomatically the best form of environmental ethics, should find this book particularly arresting—especially in light of the alternative strategies Dan O’Neill examines here.

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NORTH TO THE YUKON TERRITORY VIA THE ALCAN HIGHWAY IN 1948: FIELD NOTES OF THE ANDOVER-HARVARD EXPEDITION. By ELMER HARP, Jr. Whitehorse: Archaeology Programme, Tourism and Culture, Government of Yukon, 2005. ISBN 1-55362-226-X. 118 p., maps, b&w illus., bib. Softbound. No price given. (Available from Department of Tourism and Culture, Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6.)

This account chronicles the daily events of a four-month field project in the Yukon Territory in 1948. Although best known for his later distinguished career in eastern Arctic archaeology, Harp participated in the last year of the Andover-Harvard Project, a pioneering but forward-looking attempt, organized by Hugh Raup and Frederick Johnson in the 1940s, to combine archaeological and paleo-environmental research in the virtually unknown interior of northwestern North America (Johnson and Raup, 1964).

The daily entries begin on the drive north, on 8 May in North Dakota, and terminate abruptly on 5 September, during the breaking of the last camp on Kluane Lake. They are replete with details, some of them juicy—for example, an uneasy night spent of necessity in “a middle class whore-house” in accommodation-depleted Edmonton (p. 2). Also itemized are expenditures for gas, food, lodgings and beer, books read, letters written and received, daily weather, camp visitors, fishing expeditions, adventures with refractory vehicles, and the sometimes appalling condition of the roads. The prices cited tell us we are in a different age—gasoline for under 30 cents a gallon in North Dakota and a good room for two for six dollars a night in Montana. Some details are provided on the daily scientific work—for example stratigraphic sections