

Danish “Ø”—not the Norwegian “Øya.” This mistake is particularly embarrassing (and probably irritating to Danes) in that these islands lie within the area whose sovereignty was disputed by Norway and Denmark until 1933, when the International Court of Justice in The Hague awarded it to Denmark.

The editor has correctly and sensibly made the disclaimer in his preface that “even in three volumes it is impossible to cover every topic” (p. xlii). Yet within the category of “Explorers and Exploration” there are several surprising omissions and topics that are inadequately covered. In the latter category is the topic of the International Polar Years. Despite the enormous interest in the upcoming Fourth International Polar Year (2007–08), the single entry covering its scope and the details of the previous three International Polar Years is sketchy in the extreme. Furthermore, this topic lacks the “Further Reading” list that accompanies most other entries.

A topic that has been totally overlooked, but which equals or exceeds in importance many of the topics that are covered, is Vasilii Chichagov’s series of expeditions (1764–66) aimed at trying to find a Northeast Passage (or the North Pole, or both) via the west coast of Svalbard. The brainchild of scholar and promoter M.V. Lomonosov, the project involved a “reconnaissance in depth” by six ships in 1764, which left a wintering party in Recherchefjorden off Bellsund, and two forays by Vasilii Chichagov, each involving three ships, in 1765 and 1766. These forays were blocked by ice in both years, and the highest latitude attained was 80°28’ N. Captain Constantine Phipps, however, who seven years later led a one-season British expedition with the same objectives that penetrated only six minutes farther north, was deemed to merit an entry!

And finally there is no comprehensive entry on the Russian Navy’s “Great Northern Expedition,” otherwise known as the Second Kamchatka Expedition, of 1733–43, arguably one of the most ambitious and most successful exploring expeditions of all time. Its seven detachments were coordinated by Vitus Bering, and five of those detachments explored the Arctic coast of Russia. Their efforts resulted, in 1746, in a remarkably detailed and accurate map of almost that entire coast, at a time when the map of the Arctic coast of North America was a total blank west and northwest of Hudson Bay and Foxe Basin. While there are entries for some leaders and members of these detachments (e.g., Semeon Chelyuskin and Dmitriy and Khariton Laptev) and their activities, most of the other detachments are totally overlooked. While there is an entry entitled “Second Kamchatka Expedition,” it deals solely with one of its components, namely the voyage by Bering and Chirikov from Kamchatka to the coast of Alaska and back—a voyage that did not even reach the Arctic.

In the production of an encyclopedia, there is a very heavy onus on the editor and publisher to ensure a very high degree of accuracy and consistency, in that such a work is likely to be consulted as a definitive source of information for a very long time, and as a result, its

mistakes will be perpetuated. Sadly, in this regard, this encyclopedia falls very far short, certainly with regard to the entries on Explorers and Exploration (approximately 12% of the total). A random check of entries in other categories has revealed them to be apparently almost entirely free of errors, misspellings, and inconsistencies. Why these shortcomings should seemingly be concentrated in one particular category of entry remains a mystery, but it is very unfortunate, in that they lower the value of an otherwise mainly excellent reference work.

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A PREHISTORY OF THE NORTH: HUMAN SETTLEMENT OF THE HIGHER LATITUDES. By JOHN F. HOFFECKER. Piscataway, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2005. ISBN 0-8135-3469-0. xv + 227 p., maps, b&w illus., notes, bib., index. Softbound. US\$29.95.

We’ve all been taught that one shouldn’t judge a book by its cover. This book’s cover bears its title, *A Prehistory of the North: Human Settlement of the Higher Latitudes*, and a polar projection map showing parts of the Arctic. Both prove the old adage true: neither the title nor the map provides a really good guide to the contents of this book. I spent a lot of time trying to think what a more accurate title might have been, and most of my answers ended up something like “A Prehistory of the Northward Expansion of Human Settlement.” That might better reflect the content of a 142-page book in which the chapter entitled “Into the Arctic” doesn’t begin until page 96, and in which the reader will learn at least as much about *Homo erectus* and archaeological sites in Africa and southern Europe as about archaeological sites in the Subarctic or Arctic. So readers who, like me, look at the title and expect this book to be the much-needed synthesis of circumpolar prehistory will be disappointed. What John Hoffecker has attempted in this book, however, is both more ambitious and more interesting. He has attempted to summarize the history of the process by which a tropical species—*Homo sapiens* and its ancestors—adapted to temperate and then to cold environments.

The book’s introductory chapter uses the Vikings’ occupation of Greenland and their visits to the Eastern Canadian Arctic as a way to introduce some of the constraints on human settlement of cold environments. The rest of the book is a straightforward prehistory: the chapters outline the archaeological and biological evidence

relevant to the northward expansion of human populations during successive temporal and geographical stages. The second chapter, "Out of Africa," summarizes information about the Great Apes and about early human evolution, through to the expansion of *Homo erectus* from Africa into southern Eurasia approximately 1.8 million years ago. "The First Europeans" documents the earliest human occupations of significantly northern latitudes approximately 800 000 years ago. This is followed by "Cold Weather People," which deals with the occupation of Europe and adjacent areas by the Neanderthals between 300 000 and 30 000 years ago. "Modern Humans in the North" jumps back in time to the origins of anatomically modern *Homo sapiens* in Africa and then summarizes the archaeological evidence for their colonization of Europe and Asia up to a latitude of approximately 60° N. The following chapter, "Into the Arctic," documents the period after the last Glacial Maximum approximately 20 000 years ago, which saw the initial spread of people above the Arctic Circle. That chapter also documents the human occupation of Beringia and expansion into the Americas. The final chapter, "Peoples of the Circumpolar Zone," summarizes all of recent Arctic prehistory up to the present day.

That brief synopsis of the book reveals one of its genuine strengths and hints at a couple of its weaknesses. A real strength is its broad scope and its attempt to understand the human occupation of the high latitudes as part of a process that can be traced far back in human biological and cultural evolution. Throughout the book Hoffecker documents cultural developments and biological changes that he believes were critical to human success in increasingly cold climates and northern latitudes. The book is also meticulously annotated, with 39 pages of endnotes and an extensive bibliography. But the grand scale of the task Hoffecker has set himself, combined with his decision to write a relatively short book, means that most of the really important topics are dealt with in a very cursory fashion. A book that in just 142 pages discusses both the origins of human bipedalism and the migration of the Thule culture into Arctic Canada, plus everything that happened in between, really can't go into any topic in adequate detail. That leads to what I perceive as another weakness: it is difficult to identify a large audience for whom this book would represent an entirely satisfactory treatment of the topic. Readers without any background in Arctic prehistory but interested in learning about human occupations of the North will be disappointed by the limited amount of information on that region in this book. Conversely, readers who are somewhat knowledgeable about Arctic prehistory but interested in learning how humans came to arrive there will probably already be familiar with the broad story of human evolution and will find this book to be too much of a survey.

Despite these criticisms, Hoffecker is to be congratulated for taking on such an interesting and ambitious topic. Through the extensive annotations and bibliography, he has made sure that anyone wishing to explore specific

topics in more depth will be able to access the relevant literature easily.

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#### UQALURAIT: AN ORAL HISTORY OF NUNAVUT.

Compiled and edited by JOHN BENNETT and SUSAN ROWLEY. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004. ISBN 0-7735-2340-5. xxxii + 473 p., maps, colour plates and b&w illus., glossary, bib., index. Hardbound. Cdn\$49.95.

One of the most pressing heritage concerns in Nunavut today relates to the precarious status of Inuit oral history and traditional knowledge. The fount of Inuit cultural and linguistic continuity, this knowledge is no longer being passed down orally in the seamless manner that characterized its transmission only a few generations ago. Many factors now inhibit this natural transfer, the most frequently cited being the gradual withdrawal from a land-based life, a widening "generation gap," modern schooling (despite late—perhaps too late—efforts to deliver culturally relevant curricula), mass media, language loss, and the general distractions of an increasingly urbanized settlement life.

This situation is made more urgent by the inescapable fact that most of Nunavut's oral history resides unrecorded in the ageing memories of a rapidly diminishing number of elders whose formative years were spent on the land, at arm's length from the now ubiquitous agencies of southern Canada. Today's Inuit elders represent the last generation with a firsthand link to a virtually vanished way of life, as yet inadequately documented.

Faced with this pending loss, a few Nunavut communities, notably Igloodik, Baker Lake, Arviat, and Cambridge Bay, have sought, through their historical societies and elders' organizations, to preserve at least some of their oral heritage by interviewing local elders and recording their responses. Sporadic oral history projects funded over the years by the governments of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, as well as a number of projects undertaken by Parks Canada in the Qikiqtaaluk and Kivalliq regions, have added to the growing, but still meager collection of Inuit traditional knowledge.

*Uqalurait: An Oral History of Nunavut* derives much of its content from these disparate initiatives, augmented by interviews conducted by the volume's compilers, John Bennett and Susan Rowley. Additional material is drawn from explorers' journals, conspicuously from Knud Rasmussen's *Fifth Thule Expedition*, and, refreshingly, from some later, relatively untapped sources such as the