

FLORA OF THE HUDSON BAY LOWLAND AND ITS POSTGLACIAL ORIGINS. By JOHN L. RILEY. Ottawa: National Research Council of Canada Press, 2003. ISBN 0-660-18941-0. viii + 236 p., maps, colour illus., bib., appendices. Softbound. Cdn\$49.95.

Flora of the Hudson Bay Lowland contains a complete catalogue of vascular plants found so far in the region. In itself this catalogue would be useful, but John L. Riley's book also provides us with a comprehensive analysis of the region's "young" flora—its postglacial origin and probable dispersal patterns. As Riley reminds us, the Hudson Bay Lowland is ecologically one of the youngest regions in North America. The region was the centre of the late Wisconsinan-Laurentide continental ice sheet when at its full extent, and it emerged from ice cover relatively recently. Today, the Hudson Bay Lowland has one of the most rapid isostatic rebounds on the continent, still showing rapid sea emergence. A study of its flora, and how it developed, provides ample insights on how other floras, in older post-glacial regions, may have developed.

John L. Riley, now working at the Nature Conservancy of Canada, has tapped into many years of survey material and field notes, recorded during his multiple visits to the Hudson Bay Lowland, for this latest analytic book. Riley first traveled to the region in the early 1970s, when he co-published reports on the vegetation of protected areas near Moosonee and the Abitibi River. His passion for and thorough knowledge of the flora and geography of the region were already evident in his 1980 master's thesis. He continued to publish works on the Hudson Bay Lowland, its flora, and its extraordinary peatland formations for the next 20 years. This most recent work on the Hudson Bay Lowland thus stems from decades of research by Riley and others.

Riley's stated objectives for this book were to (1) provide a complete list of vascular plants in the Hudson Bay Lowland, (2) assess and characterize the distinct floristic zones in the region, and (3) examine the probable postglacial origin and mode of dispersal of groups of Lowland plants.

The catalogue of vascular plants of the Hudson Bay Lowland is presented as a series of maps, in Appendix A, and a summary list of species with codes indicating distribution patterns and rarity, in Appendix B. Thus this *Flora* is not a field book: one should not expect the full descriptions and drawings necessary for field species identification. However, it does contain excellent photographs in full-colour plates for some of these species.

The *Flora* includes a useful overview of past studies on the zonal classification of the Hudson Bay Lowland from different perspectives, including forest-based, climatic, physiographic, and ecological. I found the reproduction of these zone maps particularly useful and pertinent. Riley describes in detail the methods and results of the floristic treatment for the region's zonal classification and provides a summary map of the floristic zonation of the region

(p. 33) for future use, and hence for analysis by other botanists. In addition, the 12 full-colour plates illustrating the typical terrain and landscapes of the Lowland are strikingly beautiful. They offer a glimpse of the ecological and geomorphologic wonders of this region.

One of the most readable sections of the book pertains to Riley's third objective: an analysis of the postglacial origin of vascular plants in the Lowland (p. 34–76). The large geographical extent of both maps and analysis makes this section a most valuable tool for biologists working on the conservation of vascular plants in all North American regions where the last glacial event left any footprint. Riley's overview in this section of past floristic "abilities" for re-colonization gives food for thought. The insights it provides allow far more substantiated speculation on how climate change will affect plant distribution than I have ever seen published.

I recommend this book for its wealth of information on this fascinating region, but also for its insights. It should be considered mandatory reading for any biologist about to visit and work in the Hudson Bay Lowland for the first time. For all other less lucky souls, I would recommend this book to biologists/botanists interested in rare plant conservation, invasive exotic plant management, and climate change. They may find insights that will help them in their work, whether they are working in a region that was at the edge of the late Wisconsinan-Laurentide continental ice sheet or near the centre.

Suzanne Carrière
Wildlife and Fisheries Division
Department of Resources, Wildlife and
Economic Development
Government of the Northwest Territories
600, 5102 – 50th Avenue
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Canada
X1A 3S8

SHEM PETE'S ALASKA: THE TERRITORY OF THE UPPER COOK INLET DENA'INA. By JAMES KARI and JAMES A. FALL. Principal contributor SHEM PETE. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2003. 2nd ed. (First edition, 1987.) xxii + 392 p., maps, b&w and colour illus., bib., indices. Hardbound, US\$65.00; Softbound, US\$29.95.

Since the publication of the first edition in 1987, the authors have revised the location, spelling, or translations of 75 sites. They have added 253 new place names from the Dena'ina, Ahtna, and Upper Kuskokwim areas. This new edition also contains 14 more stories or articles, including two epic Dena'ina stories by Shem Pete.

Shem Pete was born in 1896 and died in 1989. In his lifetime, he traveled throughout the region and had an encyclopedic knowledge of the area, its history, and its people. Dr. James Kari, a linguist, has worked with Shem

Pete, Bill Shem Pete, Sava Stephan, Sr., Peter Kalifornsky and other Dena'ina for more than 20 years, researching their language, dialects, and history. In 1978, Dr. James Fall began interviewing Shem Pete and others regarding their traditional and current use of the resources in the region. Since then, he has recorded more than 60 hours of conversations with Shem Pete and other Dena'ina elders.

The region is divided into 16 areas. A general introduction to each area is followed by the place names in the Dena'ina, Ahtna, or Upper Kuskokwim languages, with an English translation whenever possible. The location, history, and stories connected to the site give the reader an in-depth insight into the cultural heritage of the people who have lived in the area for countless generations. Interspersed among the place names are articles and illustrations of the culture of the Dena'ina, including their technology, oral history, legends, music, and biographies.

Older, traditional ethnographies, such as Cornelius Osgood's (1937) *The Ethnography of the Tanaina*, usually describe the culture of their subjects by giving an account of the material, social, and intellectual aspects of their lives. In contrast, *Shem Pete's Alaska* is like a tapestry of Dena'ina culture. The ethnogeography of the area forms the warp or supporting strands of the text. Oral history, early historical accounts, maps, legends, photos, illustrations, and biographies are interwoven as the woof of this tapestry. Although the format is based on geography, the book provides the reader with a comprehensive account of the Dena'ina of this area from their prehistory to current events and issues.

Shem Pete's Alaska is a valuable resource for Alaskans because today more than half the population of the State lives within 50 miles of Anchorage, the homeland of the Upper Cook Inlet Dena'ina. The first edition has already been used by government agencies, archaeologists, tour guides, and others as a guide to the region and its history. In addition, linguists, anthropologists, historians, and ethnogeographers will find the book a treasure-house of information not only for the data it contains, but also for the methods and techniques used to collect the information. The beautiful colored plates add an extra dimension to the work. As an anthropologist, I found the book to be an excellent reference in a different format that gives the reader a new perspective on the Dena'ina and their cultural heritage.

I have only a few suggestions for any future editions. The 1940 map of the area on page 45 is helpful as far as showing the area, railroad, abandoned road houses, and old villages. Yet I would have liked to see a more modern map of the region that included the George Parks highway and other features. Secondly, I think that a brief chronology would be helpful. For instance, dates for important events, such as the construction of the Alaska railroad, the growth of Anchorage and the surrounding area during and after World War II, and the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, would help the reader understand the context for more recent changes in Dena'ina life and culture. Finally,

Dena'ina also occupied territory to the south on both sides of Cook Inlet, to Lake Iliamna and Kachemak Bay. Osgood's ethnography included information from this area. Since Shem Pete was not familiar with this part of Dena'ina territory, it is understandable that this book makes no mention of the place names or the cultural heritage of the southern area. If reliable informants can be found, it would be good to have more data from this part of Dena'ina country.

Shem Pete's Alaska is a remarkable work. It is both informative and enjoyable reading. I highly recommend it to anyone interested in Alaska, its Native people, and the history of the state.

REFERENCE

OSGOOD, C. 1937. *The ethnography of the Tanaina*. Yale University Publications in Anthropology 16. Reprinted in 1966 by the Human Relations Area Files Press, New Haven, Connecticut.

Wallace M. Olson
 Professor of Anthropology (Emeritus)
 University of Alaska Southeast
 Box 210961
 Auke Bay, Alaska, U.S.A.
 99821

THE NORTHERNMOST RUINS OF THE GLOBE: EIGIL KNUTH'S ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS IN PEARY LAND AND ADJACENT AREAS OF HIGH ARCTIC GREENLAND. By BJARNE GRØNNOW and JENS FOG JENSEN. Copenhagen: Danish Polar Center, 2003. ISBN 87-90369-65-3. Meddelelser om Grønland, Man and Society 29. 403 p., maps, b&w and colour illus., bib., appendices. Hardbound. DKK398,00 + s&h.

Count Eigil Knuth's six decades of archaeological investigations in Peary Land and adjacent areas of High Arctic Greenland are the basis for *The Northernmost Ruins of the Globe*. In part, this book represents Knuth's wish to present a comprehensive publication of his findings on the archaeology of Peary Land—a task that he himself was not able to complete during his lifetime. In accordance with Knuth's will, and as heir to his archival information, Bjarne Grønnow directed a four-year program that resulted in the compilation of this research in a computerized database and the publication of this volume. Published on 8 August 2003, this book also commemorates the day on which Count Eigil Knuth (1903–96) would have celebrated his 100th birthday.

As Grønnow and Jensen note, it was not their intention to re-analyze Knuth's materials, but rather, to present his findings as a "starting point for future analyses and interpretations of prehistoric life and cultural history in the