

A TOUR OF DUTY IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST: E.A. PORCHER AND H.M.S. *SPARROWHAWK*, 1865-1868. Edited and annotated by DWIGHT L. SMITH. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2001. xvii + 172 p., map, colour plates, bib. Index. Hardbound. US\$34.95.

Captain Edmund Augustus Porcher began his career in the British Navy in 1837 and served aboard several vessels before taking command of H.M.S. *Sparrowhawk* in Portsmouth, England on 4 March 1865. The ship was a three-masted barque and had two coal-fired steam engines. She was 190 feet long with a complement of 90 officers, engineers, seamen, carpenters, servants, stokers, and marines.

The *Sparrowhawk* was assigned to the Royal Navy's Pacific Station at Esquimalt, Vancouver Island, British Columbia. The ship left England on 9 March 1865. After sailing around the southern end of South America and visiting the Hawaiian Islands, the ship arrived in Esquimalt Harbour on 28 October of the same year.

In his diary, Porcher describes his activities for the next two years. As a representative of the Royal Navy, the captain was responsible for keeping law and order in the area and at times holding court. After visiting Metlakatla, Fort Simpson, and the Queen Charlotte Islands, the ship made two trips to San Francisco for repairs and to pick up mail. In 1867 the *Sparrowhawk* carried out a variety of governmental duties, but Porcher also shared in many social activities in the community. In June 1867, the ship made a brief visit to Sitka, Alaska, and Porcher describes the Russian post there and the Natives (p. 98–101). In the fall, Porcher and the governor went up the Fraser River to deal with problems related to the "Grouse Creek War." In April 1868, the ship toured the Puget Sound area. Later Porcher accompanied the governor of British Columbia and his party when the capital was moved from New Westminster on the mainland to Victoria on Vancouver Island.

Before leaving his station at Esquimalt in August 1868, Porcher carried out an inspection trip to the Queen Charlotte Islands and then visited the southern tip of Alaska. He also held court regarding Indian-related matters and visited a coal mining operation. Departing Esquimalt on the last day of August, he sailed to San Francisco and Acapulco, traveled across the Isthmus of Panama, and then sailed to England, arriving in Southampton on 14 October 1868.

Porcher's journal is much more than a simple logbook; it is a diary of his activities, social events, dealings with the Natives, and observations regarding the settlements and people he visited. There are lists of sites visited, miles traveled, coal deposits, and expenses. He mentions the names of many prominent individuals he met in his travels and at social events.

Porcher was not just a ship's captain; he was also a talented artist. The book contains 53 plates, reproductions of his watercolor paintings from the places he visited. The paintings are an excellent addition to the text. The entire text and these illustrations are of the highest quality. However, this reviewer found the one map (p. xvii)

completely inadequate. It shows the coastline from San Francisco to Sitka, and for British Columbia, Esquimalt is the only location given. For readers who are not familiar with the location of the many places Porcher visited, a set of charts or maps would have been very useful.

The book is a fine addition to the historical literature on 19th century British Columbia and the Northwest Coast. The informative footnotes by the editor, Dwight L. Smith, are a significant contribution to the text. The editor refers to many newspaper articles regarding the activities of the *Sparrowhawk* and its commander. Smith has also done a fine job of dividing the journal into nine chapters, providing a brief introduction to each one.

Anthropologists will also find many interesting observations concerning the Natives and their relationship to the immigrants. For example, on pages 92 to 98, Porcher describes Reverend Duncan's mission at Metlakatla, the post at Fort Simpson, and the Tsimshian Indians living in those two settlements. There is also a significant amount of geological information, especially regarding coal deposits and their use at the time.

In addition to providing an interesting journal of activities on board the *Sparrowhawk*, the book furnishes a new look at daily life along the Northwest Coast by a careful observer and artist.

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

BOREAL TIES: PHOTOGRAPHS AND TWO DIARIES OF THE 1901 PEARY RELIEF EXPEDITION. Edited by KIM FAIRLEY GILLIS and SILAS HIBBARD AYER III. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002. ISBN 0-8263-2810-5. 232 p., maps, duotone illus., bib., index. Hardbound. US\$39.95.

Every summer converted Russian icebreakers and ice-strengthened vessels take hundreds of tourists to the High Arctic, even the North Pole. The trips are advertised as adventures in expedition cruising and, although far from inexpensive, they are affordable to a broader range of people than the mere wealthy. A hundred years ago, Arctic tourism was a rare concept, but not completely unknown. Adventure-seeking sons from wealthy families could search out opportunities to join Arctic expeditions, whose leaders were usually eager to obtain funding for their enterprises.

In the summer of 1901, members of the Peary Arctic Club were busy organizing a relief expedition to the Smith Sound region in the High Arctic. Herbert Bridgman, commander of the expedition, was to deliver supplies to Peary and ascertain the fate, not only of the explorer, but also of his wife, Josephine, and daughter, Marie, who had gone

north the previous summer in the *Windward*. The ship had not returned and was presumed to have wintered in the Far North. Serving as second in command on board the relief ship, SS *Erik*, was Dr. Frederick Cook.

Boreal Ties is the story of two young men, Clarence Wyckoff and Louis Bement, who, through their financial contribution to the 1901 Peary Relief Expedition, had assured themselves and three other “paying guests” of an adventurous three months in the Far North. Readers with a keen interest in Arctic exploration will know that the turn of the 20th century was a particularly fascinating period in its history. As participants in the 1901 expedition, Wyckoff and Bement witnessed segments of a much larger play being acted out by many of the most prominent figures engaged in exploring, mapping, record setting, and laying claim to what for them were unknown lands and ice-covered oceans. In the introduction, the editors, Kim Fairley Gillis and Silas Hibbard Ayer III, attempt to set the historical stage, but, as they readily admit, Arctic exploration history is not their area of expertise. A broader perspective of historical events leading up to the 1901 Peary Relief expedition would have increased readers’ appreciation of the characters and events described in Wyckoff’s and Bement’s diaries and their excellent photographs, around which the book is constructed.

Wyckoff and Bement were undoubtedly aware of the immediate concerns expressed for the safety of Peary and his family, the reason for the relief expedition. However, one gets the impression that their understanding of the larger picture of Arctic exploration became apparent to them only as they proceeded northward. Even the seasoned Arctic and Antarctic explorer Frederick Cook would have been ignorant of recent human activities in the High Arctic, events leading directly to the 1901 relief expedition. In the fall of 1898, thickening fast ice had gradually locked Robert Peary’s ship *Windward* and Otto Sverdrup’s ship *Fram* into their respective wintering places, about 80 miles apart on the central east coast of Ellesmere Island. It is unlikely that two Arctic expeditions ever represented greater differences in leadership and objectives than those of Peary and Sverdrup. Between 1898 and 1902, Peary made a few half-hearted attempts to reach the North Pole. He was assisted by Inughuit hunters, who provided dogs, sleds, provisions, and their labour in what must have seemed an endless and often aimless series of hard journeys between Etah and the shores of the Polar Ocean. During the same four years, on the other hand, Otto Sverdrup, relying on no one but himself and his Scandinavian crew, explored, mapped, and investigated scientifically a large portion of the High Arctic islands, in the process claiming Norwegian sovereignty over the new land.

Shortly before winter solstice in 1898, Peary set out on an ill-conceived and poorly planned trip from *Windward*’s wintering place off Cape d’Urville to Greely’s Fort Conger. Peary paid dearly for the seemingly impulsive sled journey. Along the way he froze his toes, seven of which had to be partially removed by Dr. Thomas Dedrick, with

Matthew Henson’s assistance. On 18 February, the party, which included four Inughuit hunters, set out on a ten-day journey south to the *Windward*, where Dedrick completed the amputation of all but the little toe on each of Peary’s feet. About five weeks later, Peary headed back to Fort Conger. Here he demolished Greely’s large wintering house, and with the scavenged materials, constructed three small winter huts in its stead. He gathered what remained of Greely’s papers, sledged south to the *Windward*, and in August 1899 sailed to Etah, where he met up with the relief ship *Diana* sent north by the Peary Arctic Club. On board the *Diana* were three members of an expedition Peary grudgingly had agreed to assist. The planned objective of the expedition, headed by Robert Stein, had been a scientific investigation of the region Otto Sverdrup and his men had just surveyed. Peary arranged for Stein and his party to winter on the shores of Payer Harbour on Pim Island while Otto Sverdrup’s expedition sailed to the south coast of Ellesmere Island. Robert Peary decided to spend the winter at Etah. In March 1900, Peary left Etah and headed north to Fort Conger. From here he made a brief and unconvincing attempt to reach the North Pole, then settled down at his “new” Fort Conger. Aside from occasional hunting trips, he spent the year in apparent comfort and inactivity and in complete ignorance of events farther south, where his wife Josephine and daughter Marie had been forced to spend the winter of 1900–01 onboard the *Windward* trapped in Payer Harbour.

Wyckoff and Bement rewrote many of their daily entries after their return from the 1901 expedition. Wyckoff dictated his rewritten notes to his daughter, who transcribed them several decades later. In places where entries or phrases were missing from the daughter’s draft, the editors transcribed them from the original. The editors also included original sections left out of the rewritten version. Diary entries are presented for each day between 6 July and 15 September 1901. On most days, both Wyckoff’s and Bement’s entries are presented, often resulting in interesting differences between each man’s impressions of the day’s events or the people, both Inuit and Westerners, whom they met.

As the *Erik* headed north, the guests, who also included Herbert Berri, Alfred W. Church and Limond C. Stone, were inevitably drawn into the small world of the society of which they were now a part. People living in fairly tight quarters soon perceive strengths and weaknesses in others around them. Shortcomings in the daily menu and in the quality of the hired crew soon began to occupy the diary entries. Swiftly the detachment of outside observations gave way to new insights and opinions on the events surrounding them. By the time the *Erik* met up with the *Windward* at Etah, Wyckoff and Bement had learned enough about these events to feel offended at being excluded from important discussions between Robert Peary, Herbert Bridgman, and Frederick Cook. They learned that in spite of Josephine Peary’s and Dr. Frederick Cook’s appeals for Peary to return home on the *Windward*, Peary refused to heed their advice,

insisting on remaining in the North. Dedrick, who amputated Peary's toes at Fort Conger and had been with Peary for four years, also refused to leave, even when Peary in turn refused to help him in any way if he stayed. Dr. Cook was the go-between, the arbitrator trying to set things straight, much as he had been the stabilizing influence during the 1897–98 *Belgica* Antarctic expedition and during his previous attachment to Peary's northern work.

Wyckoff and Bement, like everyone else on the expedition, were drawn into the clash of wills. On the one hand, they respected Peary's stamina and single-minded focus. Nevertheless, both men expressed considerable sympathy for Dr. Dedrick and clear admiration for Dr. Cook. Peary's refusal to return south meant that the two ships would remain in the North longer than would otherwise be advisable. The extra time, however, did allow all available hands to engage in hunting and caching food for the Peary party. The journal entries for the final two weeks in Smith Sound are the most interesting. They include descriptions of one of several narrow escapes, when *Erik* was caught in the ice and forced onto her side. After many anxious hours, a lead opened and freed the ship. The ice was too tightly packed to reach Peary's proposed winter camp in Payer Harbour south of Cape Sabine, only 12 km away. All supplies, dogs, and people had to be unloaded near shore in Herschel Bay. The journal writers had become full-fledged members of the relief team, and their journal entries reflect three months on a sharp learning curve when it comes to Arctic expedition-making. In the afternoon of August 29, Peary, Matt Henson, Charlie Percy, and six Inughuit hunters and their families left the *Erik*. There was no certainty that the vessel would escape into open water. Not until noon of the following day did they break free of the ice and move into open water, where they met up with the *Windward*, exchanged some of the crew members, and returned the Inughuit to shore. On Friday 13 September, they slipped alongside the dock at North Sidney, Nova Scotia.

The diary entries are followed by short postscripts about the two writers and an equally short but interesting conclusion, describing how Wyckoff and Bement later became embroiled in the Peary/Cook controversy over their respective claims to have reached the North Pole. Neither Wyckoff nor Bement took a strong stand either way. Wyckoff apparently would have liked to believe Cook's claim, but saw the need for more convincing evidence. And that brings us back to the tangled web of people and places in the annals of Arctic exploration history. When Cook returned to Etah from his North Pole trip in the spring of 1909, he met Harry Whitney, a paying guest and sportsman hunter on Peary's 1908–09 expedition, who had spent the winter hunting with the Inuit in the Smith Sound region. Apparently Cook had handed over to Whitney his notes and instruments, which contained the evidence Wyckoff would have liked to see, for safekeeping and transport south. According to Whitney, Peary had refused to take any of Cook's belongings on board, including the presumed evidence.

For anyone with specific or even general interest in Arctic exploration history, *Boreal Ties* is an important addition to the library. The photographs alone are worth the purchase price.

Peter Schledermann
Senior Research Associate
The Arctic Institute of North America
University of Calgary
Calgary, Alberta, Canada
T2N 1N4

ARCTIC MIGRANTS/ARCTIC VILLAGERS: THE TRANSFORMATION OF INUIT SETTLEMENT IN THE CENTRAL ARCTIC. By DAVID DAMAS. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002. ISBN 0-7735-2404-5. 277 p., maps, tables, endnotes, bib., index. Hardbound. Cdn\$75.00.

Each year I begin my courses on Inuit by asking students what they know about the communities they see on the map of Nunavut. While their response as to the "when" of the present community pattern is usually vague ("Around the forties...Maybe the fifties....How about the sixties?"), their sense of how the communities came to be is much surer—because Inuit were subjected to a concerted federal government policy of long-distance relocation. When they are asked about the authority for this, the answer usually cites one of the more prominent works on the worst incidents of government intervention in the lives of Inuit (Grant, 1988; Marcus, 1992, 1995; Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, 1994; Tester and Kulchyski, 1994).

This misunderstanding of recent Inuit history has always received modest redress through the vehicle of community case studies. However, the adequacy of the available case studies to present an overall perspective is arguably problematic because few Inuit communities have received the kind of ethnographic, let alone analytical, treatment that permits serious comparison. Indeed, it has been a considerable time since a single work has addressed a question as broad and important as that of the pattern and cause(s) of Inuit migration during the middle decades of the last century in a comparative, multi-regional, and diachronic way. David Damas, in *Arctic Migrants/Arctic Villagers*, does this and does it extremely well.

This reconstruction of Inuit social history is accomplished the old-fashioned way, by drawing together virtually all the key anthropological, demographic, and (mainly unpublished) government reports and memoranda applicable to understanding both local and regional-scale movements of Inuit from circa 1930 into the 1960s. In so doing, Damas fills a major gap in our understanding of Inuit social history, especially in terms of how an important series of events in the middle decades of the last century frame a locational, sociocultural, and political template for the North we know today.