

southeast from Alaska, eventually to the plains. Presumably, during this expansion some of those people could have been diverted eastward to become followers of the barren-ground caribou herds.

Also on the theme of southern contacts, in Chapter 7 Gordon discusses evidence of "Middle Plains Indian" influence in his study region. As he notes, a number of Oxbow, McKean, Duncan, and Pelican Lake style points have been recovered: "It is likely these points were carried north by Beverly hunters who had met overwintering Plains hunters taking bison in the aspen parkland-forest transition" (p. 145). This hypothesis merits consideration, but if historical and late precontact evidence can be extrapolated to earlier times, it is likely that the plains bison rarely, if ever, wintered as far north as the forest edge (Russell, 1991:117; Malainey and Sherriff, 1996). The likelihood of meetings between hunters of migratory barren-ground caribou and hunters of plains bison is, therefore, remote. It is much more likely that there were Middle Period cultural groups who were full-time occupants of the boreal forest of Saskatchewan. These Middle Period peoples used plains-style projectile points, but whether they were immigrants from the plains or had simply adopted plains styles cannot presently be determined. Contacts between these occupants of the boreal forest and the hunters of migratory caribou can be expected to have occurred with some regularity. Parenthetically, the difficulty of identifying even projectile points to particular archaeological cultures is reflected in Gordon's category termed "Besant-Late Taltheilei-like points" (p. 145).

Also with reference to southern contacts, Gordon notes that, during Late Taltheilei times, a variety of side-notched and corner-notched arrow points were adopted. He proposes (p. 55) that these styles were adopted as a result of these northern peoples meeting "Prairie Indians" in the forest during the winter. It should be noted that the Late Taltheilei period, 200–1300 B.P., coincides with a Laurel, a weak Blackduck, and finally a vigorous and widespread Selkirk occupation of the boreal forest of Saskatchewan. None of these cultures were maintained by "Prairie Indians": they were produced by peoples out of the western Great Lakes forests, probably all characterized by some variation of northern Algonquian culture. Also, with regard to Late Taltheilei, Jack Ives' (1993:16–17) reservations about the origins and relationships of this culture should be kept in mind.

In summary, Gordon's monograph considers a mass of data from hundreds of sites in a huge area. For each period, he demonstrates that there are differences in the material culture as it occurs on the tundra and in the boreal forest. These variations are considered to relate mainly to the different activities conducted during summer, as opposed to winter, and the different lithic materials available in each geographical area. Perhaps the greatest strength of Gordon's work is the breadth of view which is taken. Too often, we become involved with the excavation of a particular site, or with a survey in a relatively small area, and we lose sight of the fact that we are working in only a tiny portion of the range of past

societies of hunter-gatherers. Gordon's work reflects an impressive attempt to consider the whole of that landscape, or landscapes, occupied by those peoples who followed the Beverly caribou herd through the ages.

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PROJECT COLDFEET: SECRET MISSION TO A SOVIET ICE STATION. WILLIAM M. LEARY and LEONARD A. LeSHACK. Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press (Naval Institute Special Warfare Series), 1996. x + 196 p., b&w illus., appendices, index, glossary. US\$27.95.

Whoever quipped that "Nostalgia ain't what it used to be" might have been preparing long-term aficionados of the Arctic to enjoy this book to its fullest measure. How many of us foresaw a few years ago that a tale set as recently as the Cold War years could arouse nostalgia in readers today? *Coldfeet* connects vignettes that should charm any reader. But for those Arctic buffs old enough to have gained experience in the region in the Cold War years, the alchemy of familiarity with events, places, and principals in this story turns global charm into high-latitude nostalgia.

Leary and LeSchack dignify the mature form of pranksterism required to carry off a feat concocted (without

negative connotation: “concocted” describes the feat, not the telling of it) in the Arctic a generation ago. Their absorbing revelation, factual and interpretive, is a tribute to dogged ingenuity. In their account, this incident comes as close to innocence from sinister motivations and global fears as can be imagined for a military adventure during the Cold War era. One unassailable reality of the 1950s and 1960s was Westerners’ curiosity and admiration for how our Soviet competitors at the time carried out their operations in the Arctic Ocean’s pack ice.

Perhaps Cold War and nostalgia are already proven ingredients for storytellers’ success. Although events like the Cuban missile crisis did numb us with fear, the early 1960s promoted a certain comic creativity. Consider how the era spawned Ian Fleming’s light-hearted fiction series featuring James Bond, Agent 007. Bond thrived on Cold War intrigues, overcame hopeless odds, and destroyed millions of dollars’ worth of material, and Fleming invariably contrived to weave stunning women into his plots. Fleming’s formulaic celebrations of Bond’s pranks capitalized on one axiom: second chances rarely come around. By the very nature of adversarial intelligence games, no espionage *coup* can be repeated; each is a unique shot at one-upmanship.

*Project Coldfeet* treats us unhurriedly to elements of a unique and previously uncelebrated Cold War “prank,” its real people, real histories, and the authentic niceties of how the all-important minutiae work. The story of *Project Coldfeet* is more suspenseful than a James Bond plot. Young LeSchack progresses through education, training, and various polar missions that groom him to be a risk-taker in the Arctic. He becomes absorbed by a vision, for which he enlists the support of Dr. Max Britton at the Office of Naval Research. LeSchack’s idea appeals to hopes for an intelligence advance. Floating Soviet ice stations, ever since the first one established by the Soviets’ Northern Sea Route Administration under Dr. Otto Schmidt and Ivan Papanin in 1937 (North Pole 1), had earned growing respect among North American counterparts. Leary and LeSchack portray the development of ice stations as team efforts uniting leading scientific thinkers with practical, resilient technicians of various nationalities.

Tough and resourceful as they were, Soviet pace-setters had to abandon their ice stations as hurriedly as anyone, as soon as forces in the pack began to destroy the integrity of ice around an encampment. Once a station’s landing strip laid out on ice floes was endangered, the Russians promptly arranged airplane flights to evacuate valuable technical personnel and their most sensitive equipment and records. Helicopters simply lacked the range to venture far into polar pack ice; icebreakers and submarines were too thinly spread and their movements too ponderous to evacuate ice stations on short notice.

Lieutenant LeSchack argued that two people should parachute into a recently de-manned Soviet ice station before the Arctic obliterated all its remains. Clues as to how the Soviets conducted their science, how far along they were in perfecting sonar detection of submarines, and other subtle details

about operations in the Arctic, could all be deduced from clues left behind in the hastily abandoned remains of an ice station. Logbooks, notes, instruments, exposed film, and the wiring left strung in and around huts should betray the state of Soviet arctic sciences to experienced polar observers. In some ways, scientific rationale for a parachute drop ought to dominate any review of this book. Readers, however, are probably equally interested in the story’s anti-establishment mischief. (Scientists will find plenty of their own rewards in the book.)

Gradually, LeSchack’s proposal gained favour within the Office of Naval Research. The weak link in his proposed operation was how to recover the agents who would be “inserted” by parachute. A visit to a vacated ice station, instead of meeting armed resistance, would pit men and technology against deteriorating ice conditions and the vagaries of arctic weather. Here, Robert Fulton’s Skyhook apparatus, a system being devised for plucking agents from difficult terrain (or ice), enters the story. Skyhook used fixed-wing aircraft flying overhead of places where they could not land and take off again.

Paralleling their historical treatment of drifting ice stations, the authors elaborate on the Skyhook retrieval system. They trace precursors of Fulton’s Skyhook, describe dozens of tests of his prototypes, and share participants’ accounts of how it actually felt, once Navy sponsors approved human trials, to be lifted off the ground by this unorthodox technology. Inevitably, the tedious process of perfecting design elements in Skyhook’s early Rube Goldberg configurations was punctuated by some ludicrous moments. The first pig-snatch by Skyhook resulted in a cable-spun subject, dizzy and disoriented at the top of its trajectory. When reeled into the airplane, the confused pig tried to vent its annoyance on the horrified flight crew. Subsequent test animals were aerodynamically outfitted to reduce spinning during lift, and were afforded less freedom of expression—not to mention severely reduced freedom of movement—upon entering the interiors of airplanes retrieving them.

Throughout, Leary and LeSchack seem to relish portraying for us the timeless importance of colourful personalities, who form networks of experienced individuals and who trust one another as each takes assigned risks—with the irrepressible camaraderie uniting men of action. Against the deadening tendencies of U.S. Navy bureaucracy, Coldfeet personalities burrowed through entrenched inertia to get things done. Heroes dot this landscape of achievement. They include Robert Fulton, LeSchack’s jump partner; Captain James Smith, the Operation Commander; Captain Cadawalder; Max Brewer and staff, like Kenneth Toovak, Sr., at the Naval Arctic Research Laboratory in Barrow; and, naturally enough, the staunchly supportive Dr. Max Britton of the Office of Naval Research.

Some readers might question whether, at the end of the day, the Arctic mischief described in *Project Coldfeet* netted an intelligence gain sufficient to warrant the cost borne by taxpayers. That imagined criticism would be the silly application of a current yardstick—however politically correct in

the 1990s—to a 1960s context. Worse, it risks conflating judgement of a specific account and judgement upon several decades of regional affairs. Leary and LeSchack's book endows serious historical debate with both candour and detail. Readers born more recently than, say, 1960 are unlikely to share the nostalgia for intrigues during the Cold War in the Arctic. Nevertheless, a younger generation must someday come to terms with all the legacies of that era.

Co-authorship by Leary the historian and LeSchack the instigator knits together a well-rounded disclosure of Project Coldfeet. My enjoyment of this book extends to their success with the art of collaborative scholarship. They stimulated my appetite to read more books from the Naval Institute Press, in which I hope to be rewarded by standards of scholarship comparable to theirs. I commend *Project Coldfeet* equally to readers seeking an in-depth exploration of Arctic affairs, and to those seeking delight in a deftly spun yarn.

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**LOBSTICKS AND STONE CAIRNS: HUMAN LANDMARKS IN THE ARCTIC.** Edited by RICHARD C. DAVIS. Calgary, Alberta: University of Calgary Press, 1996. xiv + 326 p., maps, b&w illus., index. Hardbound, Cdn\$44.95; Softbound, Cdn\$29.95.

The title of this book is intriguing. Why “lobsticks and stone cairns”? The editor, Richard Davis, explains in his preface that

In the forested regions of the North, travellers of the past lobbed off all but the topmost branches of prominent spruces or pines to create landmarks for other travellers—hence, the word “lobsticks.” Farther north beyond the tree line, piles of stones were gathered into “cairns” to mark the way. (p. xii)

Davis goes on to say that “the men and women featured here are landmarks, too, on this journey through the human history of the Arctic.”

The book consists of one hundred short biographies of these chosen actors, in an attempt to make the reader familiar with the “two Norths” that he believes exist:

One is a vast piece of physical geography that can be weighed, measured, and quantified. The material features of that North—the cold, the distances, the ice—have shaped the people who have lived there or travelled in it. The other North—elusive, ambivalent, powerful—is a construction of the human imagination, built upon the experience of humans as they have come into contact with that other and more physical North. One North is a Place,

the other an Idea. One North is the geologist's or the topographic surveyor's “land”; the other is the artist's “landscape.” (p. xi)

The biographies are by different authors, including the distinguished historian, L.H. Neatby. They are based on the series of “Arctic Profiles” published between 1982 and 1987 in *Arctic*. In leafing through the pages, one's first impression is that of attending a conference or large party. Some people are old friends whom one knows well. Others one knows only slightly or not at all. Many come from the nineteenth or twentieth centuries (for example, Sir James Clark Ross and Captain Joseph-Elzéar Bernier). Others, like Jens Munk, Thomas James, and Moses Norton, lived in earlier times. Their origins and nationalities vary, too, as do those of the writers of these biographies. “This multiplicity of voices and cultural backgrounds,” remarks Davis, “best reflects our constructed image of the North” (p. xiii). He must have long pondered how best to organize the book. Should the 100 pen portraits be arranged alphabetically, chronologically, or in some other way? The solution is a happy one—to group them according to geographical area, which results in 16 “units” altogether. Within these groups there is considerable diversity. For example, in Unit 7, we have David Thompson (1770–1857), surveyor of the lands from Hudson Bay to the Columbia River. We also have A.K. Isbister (1822–1883), the pioneering geologist; as well as R.M. Ballantyne (1825–1894), the author of boys' adventure stories (after six years with the Hudson's Bay Company); and E.C. Oberholtzer (1884–1977), who travelled north of Rainy Lake in 1912. Lastly, there is Prentice G. Downes (1909–1959), author of *Sleeping Island* (1943), a classic of northern literature. Each unit is headed by a well-drawn map, and each individual is portrayed by a photograph, engraving, or oil painting. There is also a brief bibliography at the end of each entry. Now and again there are other illustrations. The omission of such figures as Henry Hudson and Roald Amundsen from the biographies is pointed out by the editor. He explains this by saying that the book is not meant to be an encyclopedia—its aim is “to enhance our knowledge of the North” (p. xii). Davis also tells readers to browse and not to read straight through from cover to cover.

This is a well-produced, entertaining, informative, and worthwhile book, of interest to all concerned with northern studies, to those who live or work or travel in the North, and to readers or armchair explorers who want to know more about the Canadian North. It is certainly a book to own and read at home, not merely in a library. Since the cover of my softbound edition is curling already, buy the hardbound!

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