

A COUNTRY SO INTERESTING: THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY AND TWO CENTURIES OF MAPPING, 1670-1870. By RICHARD I. RUGGLES. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991. 300 p., illus. Cdn\$49.95.

Specialization has divided the world into separate, independent segments. It has undermined the strength of history as a generalist discipline. Life is a composite of many threads and history can only approach reality if it weaves the threads rather than separating them into individual strands. Research and publications in Canadian fur trade history are often composed of individual strands. This occurs primarily because of specialization and the unfortunate division of academia into disciplines. The result is a tunnel vision that does not reflect the real world, where each segment is interdependent on another. For example, at the most basic level it is logical to see geography as the stage and history as the play. To separate them almost guarantees a lack of understanding of the real world. French historians such as Fernand Braudel and Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie have written superb history because of an understanding of this interrelationship.

Richard Ruggles's work underlines the narrow perspectives of fur trade history because it is the first attempt to catalogue, attribute, and analyze a major portion of the magnificent map collection of the Hudson's Bay Company. The maps were of great importance to the Company and the people who produced them. They were the basis of planning, policy, and expansion. More important, they detailed the growing knowledge and understanding of the spatial relationship essential to exploration and expansionism. If one is to understand these historic thrusts, an understanding of the maps is essential.

This work has gone through much since it was proposed in 1978. I am glad that it is finally published. It was originally to have been the 34th volume of the now defunct Hudson's Bay Record Society. Ironically, this might have been a blessing in disguise because the demise of the Society freed the work from a series that had a very strict format and size. A major purpose of the book is as a working document for other researchers. It would have been foolish to publish maps in a smaller format. Maps placed in pockets invariably get lost. Folded maps are difficult to include and hard to use.

From the cover, with its reproduction of the Title Cartouche to Philip Turner's 1794 Map of Northern North America to the detailed compendium of maps both known and lost, this book will increase awareness of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives and the remarkable map collection. There are five parts, with a centrepiece that is a reproduction of 66 of the maps. Part one covers Company mapping policy, the map makers, their techniques, equipment, and contributions of natives. Part two provides a history of mapping divided into eight distinct periods. Part three presents the reproductions and part four the catalogues. Part five tidies up with appendices, glossary, notes, bibliography, and index.

Many will mistake the work for a coffee-table volume, although that is not a bad situation. Public awareness and interest in the past can only serve to encourage support for more research. However, the work is much more than a glossy presentation of arcane documents. These maps and Ruggles's commentary are an intimate glimpse into the patterns of history. They provide an attraction similar to journals and diaries, a glimpse into the soul of the recorder. Most will realize the value of the work as a resource for research in so many areas and disciplines.

Anyone who has spent many hours in the archives will be very aware of the amount of work and scholarship that has gone into this work. Perhaps that is another reason why so few descriptive studies are carried out. Anyone who has attempted to provide the background and overview necessary as a context for this type of material will appreciate the skill involved. It is not important if you have not experienced either of these situations. You will simply benefit from the quality of the final product.

In the centre of the volume 66 maps are reproduced with excellent clarity, considering the reduction in size and antiquity of the originals. Few people know that some of the originals are in colour; therefore they are not deprived. A taste of the colour is provided by the reproduction

of Turner's Cartouche on the dust cover. The decision to ensure clarity was a good one for those who cannot work from the originals.

It must have been difficult to select so few maps from so many. The selection appears to be representative of the diversity of maps in the collection. Perhaps in the future a more complete set of reproductions could be prepared and made available. Meanwhile, those who cannot visit the originals are well served by this volume.

Part four of this volume provides three catalogues of wider value to researchers, librarians, and many others, although of less interest to the general reader. The three catalogues are: Manuscript Maps in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Manuscript Maps in the Other Archives, and Manuscript Maps Not Located. Each reflects the effort that has gone into this work and is an excellent reference source. Some might consider the last catalogue as irrelevant. It has value if only because someone might know of the existence of the maps in other collections.

Dr. Ruggles has combined his experience, scholarship, and hard work to produce a document of value to others. It is an anachronism nowadays that a theory based on a few facts is more valuable than descriptive work that is useful to many researchers. The book provides a valuable synthesis, an overview, when specialization is considered the hallmark of good scholarship. Some argue that Record Society publications are no longer necessary with inter-library loans, microfilm and other techniques. This volume shows that they are still appropriate for some materials.

Many, especially those in the sciences, think that history has little relevance to the present. They should consider the value of continuous, detailed maps, pictures, records, and descriptions of a landscape from the start of the European incursion. One of the challenges to science is to determine the anthropogenic effects upon our earth. These records provide a rare opportunity to measure that impact. Much of the potential of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives remains. This work illustrates the wealth of material available and will serve to encourage wider and more complete research. This in turn will add to our understanding of our past and our future.

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THE TRANS-ALASKA PIPELINE CONTROVERSY: TECHNOLOGY, CONSERVATION, AND THE FRONTIER. By PETER A. COATES. Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press, 1991. 447 p., photos, illus., maps, end notes, selected bib., index. Hardbound. US\$45.00.

Having spent a good deal of my academic and professional career involved in issues surrounding resource development and conservation in "the North," when I received a request from *Arctic* to review this book I welcomed it with relish and a measure of trepidation. My mixed feelings stemmed from a belief that while time broadens one's perspective on issues and sets the stage for a better balance in perspectives, time also has a tendency to knock off some of the rough, but very important, edges that exist and provide focus and direction to major resource developments in pristine areas. This belief became the major academic litmus test upon which I judged the book, the shibboleth by which to distinguish it from interesting but shallower analyses.

While the title of the book implies it is about the Aleyska pipeline, readers should be prepared to relax and sink deeply into their comfortable chair, for the book offers much more than a highly focused and specific analysis of issues directly related to the pipeline itself. In fact one might say that the pipeline is the transportation medium and oil the solvent for an intellectual analysis of the value of wilderness