

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

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to the psychological identity of North Americans. The perceptual dichotomies of wilderness, either as something to be conquered and subdued (the developers) or as something to be preserved and maintained as a reminder of our roots to the natural ecosystems of the earth (the conservationists), are the major protagonists upon and around which Coates undertakes his analysis and weaves his story.

The book nicely divides into three sections: a historical review of Alaska and its development proposals and issues from 1867 up to the late 1960s, the Trans-Alaska Pipeline debates and conflicts leading up to a climax with the announcement of construction in the 1970s and finally the resolution of the story with details of construction and a post-project analysis.

In the first section the reader is led through an analysis of various images of Alaska as the last frontier, which range from icebox to storehouse. The taming of Alaska is frequently compared to the settlement of the American West. In this context Coates provides details of various development proposals that span small activities through to the Ramparts hydroelectric dam and Project Chariot. The latter of these proposed to create a deep-water harbour on the Chukchi Sea by exploding four nuclear devices. Coates uses these details to provide a convincing history of conservation in North America and present a plausible and well-argued analysis of the turf wars between the conservation and development lobbies over the first century of Alaskan-U.S.A. relationships.

The second section continues along the same general line as the first; however the playing field for the contest between the two protagonist groups now focuses on the Trans-Alaska Pipeline specifically and we are treated to the full-blown and gory details of the conflicts in the quest for approval. This section has all the tension and other attributes one might expect in a thriller novel. The personalities, and development or conservation thrusts, of the cast of characters are developed with skill, while plots and sub-plots move across the stage like a well-developed Russian novel. What is amazing about this section is that the reader does not get bored with the excellent referencing and attention to minute detail so necessary to qualify the book as a sound historical analysis. This section ends with the announcement of congressional approval for the project in 1973.

The final section of the book begins with a very fast-moving and highly readable technical synopsis of the project and then wraps up with an analysis of the impacts ten years after the oil began to flow.

The text concludes with the observation that there has been conflict in Alaska on three levels since 1867. The first source of conflict is the struggle between "the intrusive culture and the natural environment"; the second, a cultural contest between invaders and indigenes; and the third is the antagonism between the ideologies and policies of boosters and conservationists.

From the academic perspective it is very obvious that Coates has done his homework. The text is supported by 80 pages of "fine print" notes, which provide grist for the academic mill and lay bare all the material consulted in the process of the analysis. These notes are followed by 25 pages of selected bibliography and an index.

Overall, this book warrants very high commendations. It is readable, maintains a high academic standard, appears free from bias, yet has not lost the sense of tension that played throughout the whole evolution and construction of the pipeline project.

The book will be of interest to anyone who is intrigued by large-scale resource projects whether or not they are directly involved in such undertakings. Conservation groups, development interests, policy makers and legislators who find themselves embroiled in similar undertakings in the future ignore this work at their peril. It will undoubtedly serve as perhaps the single most important general reference for post-project analysis as we gain more experience from the operation of the pipeline over the ensuing years. Clearly the book passes the academic litmus test I set out at the beginning of this review.

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THE WAKE OF THE UNSEEN OBJECT: AMONG THE NATIVE CULTURES OF BUSH ALASKA. By TOM KIZZIA. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1991. 275 p., map. Hardbound. US\$19.95, Cdn\$24.95.

Alaska is home to some 200 Aleut, Eskimo, and Indian communities, bound together to varying degrees by ties of language, culture, and history, yet at the same time as distinct and unique as the individuals who live in them. In *The Wake of the Unseen Object*, Tom Kizzia takes himself and the reader to several of these villages in an explicitly personal quest for discovering ancient ties in a modern world. "I did not imagine a traveler to the bush would find Nanook of the North eking out his subsistence with kayak and harpoon, but it seemed possible that, somewhere between James Fenimore Cooper and Chuck Berry, Alaska's indigenous people remembered something about the world the rest of us have forgotten" (p. 7).

The primary communities he visited include English Bay, Wales, Teller, Golovin, Tetlin, Ekwok, New Stuyahok, Koliganek, Togiak, Sleetmute, Lower Kalskag, Tuluksak, Akiachak, and Scammon Bay. Except for a single map placing these communities in the state of Alaska, there are no illustrations in the book. While it is easy to think of photographic possibilities for a work such as this, the readable narrative renders their absence virtually unnoticeable. Only a couple of minor spelling errors were found in an otherwise well-edited and nicely designed book.

Kizzia's is a very well-written and readable account, with a generally good understanding of some of the broad issues of contemporary Alaska Native concern. Much of the book consists of dialogue with local people, descriptions of the natural and cultural environment, accounts of Kizzia's own adventures, and brief excursions into historical and contemporary issues in order to place his narrative into better perspective.

However, as successful as this book is on a personal and popular level, it nevertheless possesses some shortcomings that render it far less useful as a serious study of Alaska Native cultures. First, while Kizzia does touch on certain historical subjects of importance to the communities he describes, these provide at most the barest foundation upon which to understand the political and economic processes that have brought Alaska Natives into today's world.

Second, though never made particularly clear, it is apparent that Kizzia spent very little time — several days at most — in each community he visited. Such limited exposure is simply inadequate for understanding very much at all about Native communities, or about anyone anywhere. Compounding this is a third problem, namely, that much of Kizzia's brief time in these communities was spent talking with individuals who, whether Native or white, to a large extent cannot be considered representative of their community's population as a whole. These included such people as store owners, village mayors, a priest, an Alaska state trooper, and a tour guide. These were the people most accessible to Kizzia — most willing to talk, and easiest for Kizzia to talk with — but hardly typical of the bulk of a more traditional Native population.

To an extent, Kizzia makes up for these shortcomings through his unpretentious attitude and lucid prose. As a highly individual narrative of the sights, sounds, and feelings witnessed by a perspicacious contemporary traveler, this book may be recommended. On the other hand, though *The Wake of the Unseen Object* does not pretend to be an anthropological treatise, its usefulness to anyone wanting more than a superficial glimpse of contemporary Alaska Native cultures is severely limited.

In sum, Kizzia has produced a sensitive and interesting account of his own quest to understand contemporary Alaska Native cultures. However, as he wrote of his stay in the Inupiat community of Wales,