

To flesh out the Colcleugh collections, other materials were purchased from private collectors during 1986-87, encompassing periods of beadwork production missing from the former. Most important of these was the Bedford collection from England. In addition, Hail and Duncan collected 58 new pieces during the course of their fieldwork and obtained interviews concerning modern craft production in the same areas. These are also incorporated into the volume, resulting in a very satisfying work.

The volume is divided into two basic parts: a series of substantive essays relating to the collection, and the color plates and catalog of the collection itself. In spite of the fact that the catalog is not directly integrated with the essays (as, for example, in *Crossroads of Continents*), the initial essays allow a much greater appreciation of the collection. The book opens with an introduction by the authors and a foreword by Shepard Krech, which together indicate the history of the collection and place the volume in a larger context. Chapter I, "The Subarctic Region: People, History, and Art," provides a brief introduction to the Algonkian and Athapaskan peoples, stressing commonalities in the subsistence, technology, social organization, and artwork traditions of precontact groups and the broad regional impact of forces of historical transformation, including the Hudson's Bay Company and Christianity in various forms. A final section of this chapter, "Floral Embroidery in the Subarctic," links these transformations to the development of historical beadwork traditions of the type found in the Colcleugh collection. Chapter II is a detailed account of Emma Shaw Colcleugh's life and travels, including a map of her journeys, reproduction of her notebooks and articles, and historical photographs that place her travels in context. Also included in this chapter are reproductions of Colcleugh collections from the Northwest Coast and Alaska, outside the context of the remainder of the catalog.

Chapter III, "Styles and Style Change," focuses on two theoretical issues: the use of style to delimit synchronic regional traditions among Algonkians (Cree) and Athapaskans of the Central Subarctic; and the use of "visual perception theory" to trace the diachronic evolution of floral designs in the same region. The latter, based on gestalt theory, argues that transmission of adopted styles (e.g., in beadwork embroidery) from their point of origin to outlying regions inevitably involves simplification in form, color, and number of design elements. This is because imitation begets simplification, as the minds of individuals (or cultures) attempt "to discard visual noise, and to focus on essential information and retain it for future recognition." (Similar ideas have formed the basis of archaeological seriations for 100 years.) For example, in western Athapaskan styles from the Yukon-Tanana region, "motifs were often open rather than solid . . . [and] many motifs were single-element and simply outlines." Special attention is given to "firebags" (for tobacco, flint, and steel, or for shot and shooting accessories), particularly the so-called "panel bags" and "octopus bags" of subarctic Algonkians. This is followed in Chapter IV by a discussion of "Subarctic Arts Today," including not only the degree to which traditional objects and techniques for their manufacture survive, but also how traditions of instruction continue from mothers to daughters and by other means. Modern marketing techniques are also discussed. An extensive test case is presented from a relatively isolated community of Cree, Chipewyan, and Metis in northern Manitoba. There, beadwork traditions continue primarily for sale, although they also continue for non-functional clothing such as necklaces, vests, belts, and knife sheaths. The latter items serve less to exhibit ethnic than individual identity, except when travelling outside the community. In terms of individual ethnic groups, Cree, Chipewyan, and Metis beadwork were difficult to distinguish, and widespread borrowing took place from a variety of sources, including books. Individual women maintained "ownership" of the designs that they created (up to 100 in some cases), yet they were not considered family property. These social transformations represent important changes in the transmission of cultural traditions.

Finally, women's issues form an important secondary focus of the volume. The book is written by two women about the collections of another woman, Emma Shaw Colcleugh, who was at the center of an

active women's movement based in the northeast United States at the end of the 19th century. (Her involvement in that movement is thoroughly covered in Chapter II.) She also, consciously or unconsciously, primarily collected items of interest to women, particularly small, decorative objects and dress ornaments; only ten items were traditional male possessions. From another viewpoint, the objects discussed here were all created through the hard work and handiwork of women, most of whom remain(ed) anonymous. To some degree, this was the result of Native traditions, by which men travelled and traded, displaying the artworks that their wives created. To a larger extent, however, it was a result of the fact that "to earlier Euro-American collectors, only a woman's handiwork, not the woman, was of consequence." These issues are well discussed by June Helm in a brief epilogue to this volume, entitled "Women's Work, Women's Art."

The catalog that follows the essays is beautifully produced, with detailed attributions of the sources of pieces, as well as collector's comments, descriptions, interpretations, and comparisons. The 27 color plates are particularly outstanding. Many of the black-and-white illustrations are accompanied by details of quill weaving and plaiting or babiche netting and knotting. The catalog itself is subdivided into two parts: the "Old Collection" (p. 140-238) and the "Contemporary Collection" (p. 239-292). Each section contains parallel units on quillwork, threading, beadwork, babiche, hidework, and birchbark, facilitating comparison between old and new industries.

Altogether, the book simultaneously accomplishes three goals: providing excellent documentation of an important collection of 19th-century material culture; placing the materials within the cultural contexts of both the makers and the collector; and providing an interesting theoretical framework deriving from the psychology of art production. It should therefore be of significant value to anyone interested in the material culture of northern populations.

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NORTHERNERS: PROFILES OF PEOPLE IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES. By DOUGLAS HOLMES. Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1989. 190 p., 24 photos. Softbound. Cdn\$16.95.

Northerners is companionable bedtime reading for northerners, for non-residents who know the North well, and also for those who don't but would like to. It is recommended as well for skeptical acquaintances of readers in any of the above categories; even if they are not fascinated by the North, the skeptics will enjoy meeting the

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people portrayed in this book, who are themselves about as interesting a collection as can be found anywhere. In photographs and very conversational short essays, we meet activists, artists, travellers, adventurers, free-thinkers, humanists, builders, and resourceful individualists with a powerful attachment and record of service to their community.

The author's craft is all in the portraits. Neither the brief preface nor the division of the book into four parts (Traditional Lives, Political Lives, Business Lives, Modern Lives) illuminates much about either the North or the people: for example, how does one distinguish a "modern" from a "political" life, and why? Nor is the book intended as investigative journalism. Those figures from northern public life whose careers might be considered overdue for some critical scrutiny are not included. The portraits are all of unusual or interesting — and on the whole admirable — people. The information about them is rarely critical, damaging or private; we learn about as much as a curious sojourner would learn if she met the subjects over a coffee or dinner and later mined the rich northern gossip fields for more information.

To look for more is to seek a book that the author did not intend to write. In the one he did write, the portraits are lively, clear and (at least with respect to the people of whom I have some knowledge) faithful to the subjects and accurate in broad brush. We spend enough time with each person to learn a good deal about what their journey through life has been and what it has meant to them. The subjects are well chosen, having lived sufficiently examined lives that they are able to give an intelligible account of what certain events and decisions have meant. All of the people in this book are treated with respect, their stories told lucidly and with a certain gentle care. By Douglas Holmes's account, Annie G. Robert, Anna Nungaq, David Ruben Piqtoukun, Richard Beck, Abe Okpik, Rene Fumoleau, Benjamin Arreak, Nick Sibbeston, Tagak Curley, Cece McCauley, Stephen Kakfwi, Lynda Sorenson, Peter Ittinuar, Nick Lebessis, William Nasogaluak, Doug Billingsley, John Todd, Ed Klaus, Tom Heyachandran, T. David Marshall, Edna Elias, Margaret Thrasher, Sharon Firth and Bezal Jesudason are good company indeed.

Northerners is, at first glance, a skillful addition to the "colourful characters" genre of books about the North. This quintessentially non-indigenous literary tradition, which celebrates the idiosyncrasies and hardness of those who live in the North, includes the work of Robert Service, Jack London and Pierre Berton among many other less talented writers. Though perhaps some kind of heir to the colourful characters tradition (in the sense that it is about the people who live in the North), *Northerners* is also an important counterpoint because of the way in which the author's "subjects" are presented. Without fuss or fanfare, Homes has included northerners of both genders, in many occupations and from a healthy selection of the available nationalities — Inuit, Dene, Metis, various kinds of European and Asian migrants, as well as people of mixed heritage. The characteristics of gender, nation and class arise in the (implicit) conversation among author, reader and subject, but these characteristics are never presented as the most important information about anyone. What is important is what people do and have done, what they believe and how they explain themselves. Though a good deal of politics is talked, no one is made to symbolize or represent any particular nationality or political tendency. Across the various ethnic and social divides, people approach each other as individuals, with their contribution and the need for a contribution from all taken for granted.

In writing from this standpoint, Holmes represents the best that northerners have achieved — a high standard of public civility in a workable political system. This is an important achievement, especially noteworthy at a time when in many other parts of the country racial and ethnic difference threatens to assume iconolatric status as the ineluctable political marker that subsumes all others. As *Northerners* and northerners have shown, we can all do better than this.

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BOOKS RECEIVED

- A HISTORY OF THE ORIGINAL PEOPLES OF NORTHERN CANADA. By KEITH J. CROWE. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991. (Reprint plus epilogue of 1974 edition.) ISBN 0-7735-0880-5. 248 p., maps, b&w illus., appendices. Softbound. Cdn\$17.95.
- BEST LEFT AS INDIANS. By KEN S. COATES. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991. ISBN 0-7735-0780-9. McGill-Queen's Studies in Ethnic History, 11. xiii + 356 p., notes, bib., index. Hardcover. Cdn\$39.95.
- INTERTIDAL BIVALVES: A GUIDE TO THE COMMON MARINE BIVALVES OF ALASKA. By NORA R. FOSTER. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 1991. ISBN 0-912006-49-8. 152 p., map, b&w illus., glossary, bib., index. Hardbound, US\$30.00; Softbound, US\$20.00; add \$2.00 p&h.
- MEN AND WHALES. By RICHARD ELLIS. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991. ISBN 0-394-55839-1. xv + 542 p., maps, b&w illus., bib., index. Hardcover. US\$40.00; Cdn\$53.50.
- NORTH TO ALASKA! FIFTY YEARS ON THE WORLD'S MOST REMARKABLE HIGHWAY. By KEN COATES. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 1991. ISBN 0-912006-55-2. 304 p., map, b&w illus., notes, index. Hardcover. US\$29.95 + 2.00 p&h.
- NORTHWEST GREENLAND: A HISTORY. By RICHARD VAUGHAN. Orono: The University of Maine Press, 1991. ISBN 0-89101-072-6. 208 p., maps, b&w illus., bib., index. Hardcover. US\$29.95.
- READINGS IN SAAMI HISTORY, CULTURE AND LANGUAGE II. Edited by ROGER KVIST. Umeå, Sweden: University of Umeå, 1991. ISBN 0283-9687. Center for Arctic Cultural Research, Miscellaneous Publications No. 12. ii + 158 p., maps, b&w illus., bib. Softbound. Price not indicated.
- THE TLINGIT INDIANS. By GEORGE THORNTON EMMONS. Edited with additions by FEDERICA DE LAGUNA and a biography by JEAN LOW. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992. ISBN 0-295-97008-1. (Published as Number 70 in the Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History.) xl + 488 p., maps, b&w illus., tables, notes, bib., index. Hardcover. US\$60.00.

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- PRACH, R.W., and SMITH, A.R. Breeding Distribution and Numbers of Black Guillemots in Jones Sound, N.W.T.
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