

argues that, in initially listening to Inuit stories and recording those considered relevant, these white searchers were guilty — through selection, arrangement, and contextualization — of unconsciously manipulating what they heard. Such “editing” did not arise from any intention to deceive, but from the inevitable confusion present when one culture is asked to perceive experience through the eyes of another. The problem has since been immensely compounded by readings that too easily dismiss troublesome Inuit reports.

The book is clearly organized, Woodman using the metaphor of a court of inquiry to present his evidence. Perhaps more accurately, Woodman presents his interpretation of the evidence, for there is no new evidence in this book, only a rethinking of what has been available for many years. He begins with a brief introduction to Franklin’s expedition and his disappearance. The first chapter then addresses pre-1845 contacts between Inuit and whites among the arctic islands. An important chapter, it sets the stage for the possibility of significant relations between Franklin and the Inuit. The next chapter surveys the numerous white expeditions that attempted to determine Franklin’s fate — Rae, Anderson and Stewart, McClintock, Hall, and Schwatka. A third chapter builds a case for the general reliability of Inuit reports, including a weak section on Inuit folklore, and some excellent pages on European assessments of Inuit stories. From this point forward, nearly 300 pages, Woodman turns his attention to an extremely detailed reading of the numerous Inuit legends relating to the Franklin expedition. The book draws no firm conclusions about the fate of the crews of Franklin’s ships, but it certainly casts doubt on a number of traditional interpretations, particularly concerning the movement towards Starvation Cove.

It would be impossible to review Woodman’s book without mentioning Owen Beattie’s efforts over the past decade to determine the fate of the lost expedition. Woodman himself feels compelled to include an appendix on lead poisoning. What seems of special relevance to my reading of *Unravelling the Franklin Mystery* is that Beattie and Woodman, working nearly 150 years after the Franklin disaster, use contrasting methods in an attempt to solve the same riddle. Beattie employed the highly technical tools of forensic anthropology and medicine to acquire new data. Woodman, antithetically, reassesses old stories and legends gathered over a century ago from a nomadic hunting society. While neither Beattie nor Woodman ultimately produces concrete answers, it is promising that understanding might also be gained by looking outside the narrow ethnocentric limits of European thinking and technological virtuosity.

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THE TLINGIT INDIANS. By GEORGE THORNTON EMMONS. Edited with additions by FREDERICA DE LAGUNA and with a biography by JEAN LOW. Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History, Number 70. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992. 530 p., 65 drawings, 127 b&w photos, maps, tables, notes, bib., index. Hardbound. US\$60.00.

George Thornton Emmons served as a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy in southeastern Alaska during the 1880s and 1890s. After retiring from the service in 1899, he returned to Alaska many times, principally to collect Native artifacts for various museums. Over the years, Emmons published many articles and reports regarding Tlingit arts, crafts, technology, social life and history.

In 1900 he began work on what he hoped would be a definitive ethnography of the Tlingit. In addition to his own field research, he searched other ethnographies and monographs for material to supplement his own observations and interviews. He continued to rewrite and edit his manuscripts, but the book was still not finished when he died in 1945.

After his death, Frederica de Laguna, a leading authority on Tlingit studies, began to reorganize and supplement Emmons’s various drafts and manuscripts. She continued to edit and revise *The Tlingit Indians* for the next thirty years. As a result, what we have today is not only the original work of Emmons, but extensive additions and annotations by Dr. de Laguna. Dr. Jeff Leer, a linguist specializing in the Tlingit language, transcribed the Tlingit terms into linguistic notation and provided additional information regarding many of the terms and concepts.

Following the excellent biography of Emmons, there are 17 chapters, each analyzing and comparing various facets of Tlingit life and culture. De Laguna oftentimes reorganized Emmons’s material to integrate it in a more orderly manner. In addition to Emmons’s original sketches and photographs, the editor added many other photographs and illustrations from a variety of sources. Emmons’s contribution is particularly strong in the area of technology, arts, foods and daily life. De Laguna’s strength is in her presentation of the social organization, values and history of the Tlingit. Leer, of course, has developed a keen understanding of the language. The end result, then, is a comprehensive description of the Tlingit, with hundreds of historic photographs and illustrations.

Readers may find the book a little overwhelming at first. For those not familiar with linguistic notation, there is a key to pronunciation on page xiv. I found it useful to photocopy this page and have it available for help in pronouncing the many Tlingit terms in the text. A few readers may find that the type in the annotations and additions is relatively small, but considering the voluminous information, the small type was probably necessary to keep the book to a manageable size. A third problem may arise with the references to the many Tlingit clans. On page 436 there are two lists of Tlingit clans. The first list is by Emmons, with his own style of transcription, and the second list has the same names in linguistic notation. Since Emmons records 34 Raven clans and 32 Wolf or Eagle clans, it would have been cumbersome to write out the lengthy clan names every time they were mentioned. As a result, de Laguna chose to number the clans and then refers to them by number, such as Raven 24 or Wolf 17. Readers may also want to photocopy the clan list on page 436 and keep that list handy for clan identification.

In the back of the book are 37 tables and charts listing such things as house names, products, population, foods, medicines and calendars. This information is extremely useful for analysis and comparison.

Because Emmons was mistaken about or not aware of some aspects of Tlingit life, de Laguna has added her comments and additions to correct these shortcomings and provide more recent and accurate information. The monograph is thoroughly documented with an 11-page bibliography. There is also an extensive index.

The book itself is technically superb. The text, photographs and illustrations are all very clear. The maps inside the front and back covers enable the reader to locate the various subdivisions of the Tlingit, the neighboring Eskimos of Prince William Sound and Northwest Coast tribes to the south.

The Tlingit Indians, in my estimation, is one of the best studies of the Tlingit, and perhaps of any North American Native group. It ranks right up there with de Laguna’s monumental, three-volume ethnography of the Tlingit of Yakutat, *Under Mount Saint Elias*. It is so extensive and well documented that it will no doubt stand as one of the major references on the Tlingit for many years to come. Laypersons will find it informative, but maybe a little too detailed, unless they are particularly interested in the Tlingit. But for students of anthropology, those interested in the Northwest Coast and American Indian researchers, it is a major contribution to the literature. I have asked some well-educated Tlingit what they thought of the book. Those who had read it said that they were impressed not only with the detailed information and its accuracy, but the respectful way in which Emmons and de Laguna treat them and their culture.

Although \$60 may seem somewhat expensive, *The Tlingit Indians* is well worth the price. Libraries, anthropology departments and individuals will realize that the book is a good investment not only for information on the Tlingit, but for analysis and comparison of Northwest Coast technology, social organization and history.

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BEST LEFT AS INDIANS: NATIVE-WHITE RELATIONS IN THE YUKON TERRITORY, 1840-1973. By KEN S. COATES. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991. 356 p., 29 tables, index. Hardbound. Cdn\$39.95.

Until recently, historians writing about northern Canada confidently focussed their analyses on the Northwest Territories and Eastern Arctic. If they referred to the Yukon at all, they might casually tack on a chapter at the end explaining that the impact of the Klondike gold rush and the Alaska Highway made the Yukon a special case, somehow different from the "real North." During the past decade, Ken Coates has changed all this by publishing extensively on Yukon history and making this area of regional history a topic of serious discussion in northern studies.

In *Best Left as Indians*, Coates tackles a topic more challenging than in his earlier books — specifically, the relationship between Native and non-Native Yukoners during more than a century spanning 1840 to 1973. His thesis is that despite the "boom-bust" cycles characterizing the Yukon economy, there is evidence of continuity both in the strategies of aboriginal people and in the attitudes and policies of traders, missionaries and government agents who came to the territory. Indigenous people persisted in their commitment to hunting and trapping, hence riding out the uncertainties associated with mineral extraction. And even though successive waves of newcomers came north with conflicting objectives, they shared a good deal both in their paternalistic attitudes toward indigenous peoples and in the segregationist policies they kept reinventing, ensuring that Native peoples remained relegated to the margins of economic and social life.

Coates is at his best when he is mining the historical records, relentlessly hunting down quotations that support his thesis. Where the book disappoints is in the suggestion that it provides an analysis of a *relationship* between aboriginal people and colonizers. A relationship implies more than one perspective, and despite Coates's assertion that the Yukon provides an opportunity not available elsewhere in Canada to "assess the nature of Native choice" (p. 20) and his claim that he is showing aboriginal people as actors rather than as victims, there is little evidence of their perspective here. This may seem unsurprising, when the words inscribed in documents are provided almost exclusively by the traders, missionaries and government agents, but often those observers were lamentably ignorant about what they were describing and invariably their accounts were self-serving.

Coates pays less attention to the ethnographic record than he promises in his introduction and exhibits little curiosity about the range of decisions made by aboriginal people. His willingness to impute motives to indigenous people when he lacks data is a most troubling aspect of the book because the Hobbesian model he uses to explain how aboriginal people made their decisions is both gendered and ideologically grounded in Western cultural assumptions.

Decisions in all societies are socially and culturally constituted. The ethnographic record, based largely on oral accounts, provides extensive discussion about how particular decisions were arrived at during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the southern Yukon, for example, principles of matrilineal descent, matrilineal post-marital residence preferences, partnerships between brothers-in-law, and reciprocal bonds between members of moieties and (in southern Yukon) among members of different clans carried significant weight in important economic and social transactions. Similar principles governed interactions with strangers. While no one would disagree with Coates's statement that "... Natives were not living artifacts — non-economic people caught in the bounds of 'traditional'

society" (p. 244), some discussion of indigenous concepts of society, history and personhood would have contributed significantly to his analysis.

For example, commenting on the controversial government decision to force-register traplines in 1950, he notes that "government agents encountered serious difficulties getting Natives to identify their personal trapline areas; many disputes arose as some trappers seized the moment to expand their trapping lines" (p. 64). Yet, in the southern Yukon, where land was owned and managed by distinct clans, rather than by individuals, the idea that traplines were "personally" owned or could be registered to individuals in the first place presented aboriginal people with the insoluble dilemma. The transfer to individual ownership still causes problems in some communities today and during the 1970s some band councils applied to have traplines reassigned to the community as "group traplines." Reducing discussions of choice to a competitive individualistic model ignores the lived experience of people who participated actively in these same events.

Discussions of social relations present even more difficulties because the account is so highly gendered. The author proposes that historically the most significant contact between Native and non-Native Yukoners occurred as a result of relationships between white men and aboriginal women. Grounding his argument in a discussion of non-Native males' "sexual needs" (p. 84) and "romantic and sexual desires" (p. 89), Coates moves even further away from his earlier objective of explicating "the nature of Native choice" because his discussion becomes phrased almost exclusively in terms of how white men represented their choices to consort with aboriginal women. Any reference to choices made by women is dismissed, again with reference to an individualistic model: "... there is little documentation to indicate why Native women accepted non-Native traders as mates, beyond the likelihood that they did so for personal gain and to solidify trading relations between the company and the band" (p. 77-78). Surely some reference to women's control of their *own* sexuality in a society where principles of matrilineal descent are important and where women were unlikely to see themselves as property of men might expand any discussion of precisely *who* was making *what* choices.

Various assertions about customary marriage are uncritically advanced. He quotes the remark of a police officer in 1909 commenting on alliances with white men, "that Native women had been taken according to Indian custom, in which the man paid \$50 to \$100 to the parents and took the woman as his wife" (p. 87). Such a startling misinterpretation of conventional marriage arrangements surely deserves some commentary. Marriage signalled a relationship between members from opposite moieties and distinct clans rather than between two individuals. The alliance set in motion a complex system of exchanges ensuring that those clans recognized their ongoing relationship. A sense that the author may not fully appreciate this himself is reinforced a few pages later when he makes a distinction between marriages sanctified by the Anglican church and those "informally constituted marriages, usually ratified *only* according to Indian custom . . ." (p. 89) (my emphasis). Likewise, his comment that even under missionary influence "such old practices as polygamy, trading of wives and discarding of partners continued" (p. 129) seems unexamined. Evidence from missionary journals as well as from oral tradition confirms that it was *missionaries* who enforced "discarding of partners" because of their insistence on monogamous unions. Without some critical commentary accompanying such statements, the author's intention in citing them remains obscure.

In the discussion of church, state and Native people, problems of perspective continue. As sources for a description of Native religion, he cites three Anglican Church missionaries, Canham, Kirkby and McDonald, who may not have been the most reliable informants and who give a simplistic view of aboriginal beliefs that says rather more about Anglican missionaries (p. 166). Oddly enough, Coates then goes on to cite derogatory comments made by these same missionaries as evidence of their racism, raising questions about their credibility as experts on Native spirituality. Again, an evolutionary model is