

Heinrich Klutschak, serving as artist and surveyor, accompanied Lt. Frederick Schwatka on his search for Franklin documents in 1878-80. And William Barr's English translation of Klutschak's narrative, previously available only in German, offers a welcome new perspective through which to experience and hence to understand the past century's attitudes toward the Arctic. Not only does Klutschak's appealing and solid personality give validity to his account, but his artistic sensibility provides an interesting counterpart to Schwatka's more professional mind. Schwatka published a public narrative, *The Search for Franklin*, soon after completing the expedition, and Edouard A. Stackpole edited Schwatka's narrative for republication in 1977 under the title *The Long Arctic Search*. William H. Gilder, *New York Herald* correspondent and second-in-command of the expedition, published *Schwatka's Search: Sledging in the Arctic in Quest of the Franklin Records* in 1881. Accounts of the expedition, then, were not lacking, but Klutschak's account — *Als Eskimo unter den Eskimos: Eine Schilderung der Erlebnisse der Schwatka'schen Franklin-Aufsuchungs-Expedition in den Jahren 1878-1880* — published in Vienna in 1881, had never been available in English.

Without underestimating the fuller resonance that this different voice lends to our appreciation of an already well-chronicled expedition, I should note that Klutschak's narrative also advances our comprehension of the undertaking in a more objective sense. Throughout much of the journey, the expedition divided into two groups, Schwatka and Gilder heading one, Klutschak in charge of the other. Consequently, neither Schwatka nor Gilder is able to give a firsthand account of what occurred under Klutschak's command. Additionally, *Overland to Starvation Cove* includes a full chapter dealing with the return trip from Marble Island to Camp Daly and with the four-month wait for passage back to the United States, whereas both Schwatka and Gilder gloss over this part of the journey, presumably as being anticlimactic. Hence, Klutschak not only gives us a new perspective on the events of Schwatka's expedition, a perspective that is at times dryly humorous, but he provides the only record of large parts of that journey.

The subtitle of Barr's translation — *With the Inuit in Search of Franklin 1878-1880* — signals another important dimension of Klutschak's work. To a far greater extent than one normally encounters in exploration narratives, this account provides intimate glimpses into the lives of the Inuit with whom Schwatka's men journeyed. The expedition itself was quite remarkable for the way it adopted Inuit methods of travel, and this willingness to learn from untutored people is reflected in Klutschak's expression of sincere curiosity about and open admiration for the people on whom his own survival depended. As Barr points out, Klutschak does not shake himself entirely free of his nineteenth-century cultural baggage, but because his relationship with the Inuit was essentially egalitarian and cooperative, Klutschak's powers of observation of Inuit life were often far less blinkered than were those of his contemporaries.

The result is that Klutschak's interest in the Inuit rings true. His curiosity is a natural consequence of the pattern into which he has voluntarily locked himself. No doubt, anthropologists will fault some of Klutschak's superficial observations about Inuit social practices and spiritual issues, just as linguists will be eternally perplexed at some of the Inuit words Klutschak seems to have heard. But the daily interaction between Klutschak and his native companions reveals a dimension of nineteenth-century attitudes toward northern peoples that could never be communicated through a collection of facts about a culture. With the exception of a final chapter entitled "The Inuit of North America," added almost as an appendix, Klutschak does not merely report on the customs, beliefs, and traditions of the Inuit, but weaves that information into the invigorating narrative of this remarkable journey. His account does not just describe, for example, the Inuit diet and living arrangements; it reveals the white man's response to their practices, and often that

response changes as the outsider comes to understand why the practices have evolved.

Barr has done an excellent job of translating and editing Klutschak's work. The translation reads well, and the editorial comment — in the form of endnotes, introduction, and postscript — give an unbiased assessment of the value of Schwatka's expedition and Klutschak's account of it.

Vilhjalmur Stefansson has often been credited with being the first white man to travel extensively in the Arctic by living off the land and by adopting Inuit techniques. Even a cursory reading of *Overland to Starvation Cove* immediately gives the lie to such a notion. Yet this new translation attests that such methods — though effective — are not without immense dangers. I was struck by just how close Schwatka's party did come to complete disaster during their winter journey from the mouth of the Back River to Hudson Bay. Twenty-six of the forty-two dogs that began the trip succumbed to either cold or wolves. The men themselves fared much better, suffering no major casualties and not even any serious frostbite. But one wonders what would have been the fate of this expedition had an occasional fortuitous meeting with game or a fortunate break in weather not been forthcoming. The Inuit, after all, had learned long ago not to make such lengthy journeys in mid-winter.

Richard C. Davis
Department of English
University of Calgary
Calgary, Alberta, Canada
T2N 1N4

THE UPPER YUKON BASIN. Anchorage: Alaska Geographic Society, 1987. *Alaska Geographic* 14(4). 117 p.

Northern bookstores are full of books like *The Upper Yukon Basin*. Travel guides and picture books, aimed at the growing tourist market, proliferate like fireweed. One looks at new publications, therefore, with a critical eye. Does a recent entry promise to assist travellers in their appreciation of the North? Will it ensure that tourists gain a wide and comprehensive appreciation of a region that is all too often reduced to stereotypes? Is it sufficiently grounded in local lore and knowledge? Do the illustrations and maps convey the essence of the land and its people?

The Upper Yukon Basin focuses on the region upstream from Dawson City and is the first in a planned series on the massive Yukon River system. The book adopts the sponsoring organization's interest in geographic phenomena and natural history, although considerable space is reserved for patterns of human habitation and settlement. There is little new here. The book is targeted at tourists and those interested in an "arm-chair" trip through the far northwest. Technical sections on glaciation, geology, flora and fauna are carefully presented in a manner accessible to a wide audience.

The Alaska Geographic Society has a solid and well-deserved reputation for its sympathetic portrayal of the northland. The society's many publications have done much to introduce tourists and northerners to the natural wonders of Alaska and surrounding lands. The volumes are particularly notable for the excellent photographs; the tourism departments of Alaska and the Yukon Territory could scarcely ask for a more sensitive and positive portrayal of the region. *The Upper Yukon Basin* continues in this vein. Its many beautiful illustrations adequately reflect the natural and human history of a land that continues to entice and bewilder its residents and its visitors. The book is, however, a captive of its format — strong on the surface but lacking necessary detail.

When one moves beyond the pictures, there is not much to be found. The text, prepared by Monty Alford, is perfunctory at best, covering the bare essentials but offering little that is new or surprising. The structure of the book is a little illogical. Indigenous

people, rather incongruously, are discussed three chapters after European exploration, following sections on fish and plants and animals. Only through a careful reading (the pictures are no help on this score) would one know that native people remain a major element of Yukon society.

There are a few omissions on the maps; the Haines Road, for example, is not indicated on the largest map in the book. Perhaps not surprisingly, the tone of the book is unrelentingly positive and upbeat, with little indication of the ecological, social and economic problems that affect the area. The absence of a guide to further readings is also troubling, in that the readers anxious to pursue an interest in the region are left on their own. In the final analysis, one is left with a collection of attractive photographs, carefully selected and appropriately introduced, and an unfortunately narrow text that will add little to a visitor's appreciation of the area.

The fault lies not with the author, who has clearly done the best possible with a limited format, but with the publisher's conception of the travel guide. Perhaps driven by market forces, and the tourists' desire for simplistic, heavily illustrated coffee-table books, publishers have presented an array of such volumes on the North. They seldom go beyond superficial images and ideas and leave the reader or user with little real appreciation of the region under study. Such books are obviously popular back home, hence the publishers' interest in producing such volumes.

Several recent publications, however, have broken out of this staid and uninspiring mold and are offering more regionally based introductions to the North. George Calef's *The Dempster Highway*, a short and well-illustrated volume, provides a more careful and detailed guide to travel along this famous route.

From Trail to Highway: A Highway Guide to the Places and the People of the Southwest Yukon and Alaska Panhandle offers an even better example of the possibilities for such guidebooks. The Champagne-Aishihik band and Sha-Tan Tours produced this volume, which offers a general introduction to the region, plus a mile-by-mile guide to the area between Whitehorse, Yukon, and Haines, Alaska. The book is beautifully and appropriately illustrated — the equal of *The Upper Yukon Basin* in the selection of appropriate archival and contemporary photographs — but goes far beyond the standard regional travel guide. Drawing heavily on the knowledge of native elders, *From Trail to Highway* offers a careful assessment of native habitation in the area and uses that same knowledge to introduce the reader to the lands surrounding the highway routes. Any traveller utilizing this volume would leave the area with a much greater appreciation of the land and its people than would otherwise be possible.

Judged against the standards set by *From Trail to Highway*, Alaska Geographic's *The Upper Yukon Basin* does not fare well. The illustrations are very good, but no better than those available in a number of other books on the Yukon. The text is accurate but lacking in detail and insightful analysis. Ultimately, this book does not adequately convey a sense of the place and is of little help to travellers or outsiders attempting to understand the upper reaches of the Yukon River watershed.

Kenneth S. Coates
Department of History
University of Victoria
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada
V8W 2Y2

BEREGOVAIA CHERTA. By A.I. ALEKSEEV. U.S.S.R.: Magadan, 1987. 238 p., photos. In Russian.

This book, written by a senior scholar of the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., a specialist in history of geographic exploration and cartography, is an important con-

tribution to the field of North Pacific studies. The focus is on the history of hydrography of the Russian Pacific coasts, especially of the Bering Sea, of the Sea of Okhotsk and of the polar ocean shores from Bering Strait to Novaia Zemlia. The period covered is from the 17th century to the 1920s.

Alekseev is one of a number of major Soviet scholars who have devoted their research to documenting Russian exploration of the polar regions and the North Pacific, such as the late M.I. Belov, A.I. Andreev, L.S. Berg, V.A. Divin, and last, but not least, A.V. Efimov. Unfortunately, their work is available only in Russian (with one exception) and their contribution, as well as the contributions of the younger scholars who follow in their footsteps, finds little reflection in Western literature on the cartography and history of these regions.

This latest publication by Alekseev is unique in that it focuses on the particulars of charting hitherto unknown coasts by men whose aim is to make navigation safe, or rather safer, for their successors. In short, his focus is on the day-to-day work of men who have, through the ages, produced the equivalents of our modern *Coast Pilot*, the *lotsias* (from the Dutch *Lotse*), which contained sailing directions and detailed descriptions of coastal features as well as charts of the local features. In fact, the title of the book itself suggests that focus. While literal translation might read "The Coastline," the Russian word *cherta*, in contrast to the word *liniia*, has also the connotation of "feature." This focus is stressed in the author's choice of a quote from Lomonosov on the dangers of sailing and in his preface in which he discusses the origin of the science of hydrography. It is appropriate to remind the reader that to this day all navies of the world maintain an office of hydrography.

The book contains eleven chapters and a list of pertinent literature. In the first chapter, a brief synopsis of the history of Russian hydrography is presented and several important historical figures, such as admirals F.I. Soimonov and A.I. Nagaev, are introduced. In the second chapter, entitled "How Legends Are Born," Alekseev examines the origin and evolution of the notions of the Strait of Anian in the 16th century and the later emergence of the notion that American and Asian continents were joined. He shows how these notions affected Russian exploration and cartography. In this context, he examines the Russian penetration along the polar coast and to the Pacific. The details he provides on the basis of new archival research provide a useful supplement to the treatment of the topic in such influential work as Lantzeff and Pierce's *Eastward to Empire: Exploration and Conquest on the Russian Open Frontier to 1750* (published in 1973 by McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal and London). Chapter three deals with the early hand-produced charts of the North Pacific that have survived. The data are a useful addition to those published earlier by Belov, Andreev, Efimov and other scholars mentioned above. Chapter four deals with the Russian official naval expeditions that settled beyond the shadow of a doubt the question of the existence of the Bering Strait. Chapter five deals with Russian sailings to America and the charting of the North American coasts. Incidentally, one important aspect of Alekseev's contribution is his discussion of methods of observation and observational technology available at any given period. Another useful aspect is his discussion of individual contributions of navigators, cartographers and geodesists and not on the general results of famous expeditions. The context is always the development of Russian cartography in general. Chapter six is devoted exclusively to hydrographic work conducted by the *promyshlenniki*, the Russian entrepreneurs who sailed to America in search of furs in the 18th century. This chapter is somewhat disappointing, as it adds little to what has been published earlier, though he does introduce new elements in the discussion of the voyage of Lt. Sindt and the work conducted by navy hydrographers in Kamchatka and Okhotsk Sea waters. He discusses the data on cartography and hydrography compiled by brothers Shmalev in Kamchatka, which to this day remain unpublished. Chapter seven