

THE WICKED MATE: THE ANTARCTIC DIARY OF VICTOR CAMPBELL. Edited by H.G.R. KING. Alburgh, Harleston, Norfolk: Bluntisham Books and the Erskine Press, 1988. 192 p., maps, illus., bib. Hardbound. £19.95.

Lieutenant Victor Campbell accompanied Captain Robert Falcon Scott on his final scientific expedition to the Antarctic in 1910-13, and H.G.R. King's *The Wicked Mate* comprises Campbell's journals from those years, interspersed with excerpts from other accounts of the same expedition and illustrated with drawings and photographs, many of which have never before been published. While Scott raced southward to the Pole from base camp at Cape Evans, Campbell led his party north on scientific explorations of the Cape Adare and Terra Nova Bay regions of South Victoria Land.

The first journal — June 1910 to December 1911 — relates the experiences of the six-man party as it surveyed and carried out meteorological, geological, and botanical studies in Robertson Bay in 1911. Only one of the six was a scientist by profession, but the others — all members of the Royal Navy — were trained to collect specimens and data for use by the scientific community back home. The party had hoped to scale the glaciers surrounding the bay, thereby gaining access to the interior, but the glaciers denied them passage. Nevertheless, the data and photographs that the expedition managed to secure proved of considerable scientific interest.

On 3 January 1912, the *Terra Nova* picked up Campbell's party and carried it down the coast to Evans Coves in Terra Nova Bay, where it was to collect further scientific data and to continue the survey work. Here, the second journal begins. After landing the party and eight weeks' worth of summer supplies and food, the *Terra Nova* turned her bows and headed back into the Ross Sea, intending to call for the party six weeks later. Unusually severe ice conditions, however, prohibited the ship from relieving Campbell's party, and the poorly provisioned men had little choice but to spend the Antarctic winter on their own. The winter, which proved an exceptionally harsh one even by Antarctic standards, was passed in a 15 x 9 foot ice cave the men had dug to escape the incessant winds that made mockery of tent canvas and sliced through summer clothing to freeze flesh in minutes. Often forced to crawl on hands and knees whenever they left the shelter of the ice cave, the party eked out its survival by eating seal and penguin, a diet that contributed to serious dysentery for several individuals. A full eight months were endured under such severe conditions. And as if mere survival in that fouled and frozen pit were not test enough of human endurance, all faced a 230-mile sledge journey back to Scott's base camp at Cape Evans after the sea ice froze solid enough for sledge travel. Under Victor Campbell's command, every man survived this nearly unbelievable ordeal.

Campbell's diary entries are terse, direct, and matter of fact, but occasional flashes of character break through the mostly impersonal account to reveal an attractive personality. The journals show a subtle sense of humour and a delicate sensitivity toward both the beauty and the vulnerability of the natural world. One notes, however, that expressions of sadness brought on by the suffering of animals disappear as those same animals come to provide Campbell's party with its only means of survival. The quiet authority and respect Campbell commanded among his men mark him as a natural leader. "The Wicked Mate," which, according to the short biography provided in the volume, was Campbell's soubriquet on the expedition, lends itself beautifully to a title full of appeal for any marketing man, but little in the journals themselves displays a personality warranting such a nickname.

In one very important respect, Campbell's journals invite comparison with another book, Heinrich Klutschak's *Overland to Starvation Cove* (University of Toronto Press, 1987), which has been recently translated and edited by William Barr. Klutschak accompanied Frederick Schwatka on his 1878-80 journey to King William Island in search of documents relating to Sir John Franklin's expedition, and, as did Campbell's Northern Party, Schwatka's small

group of men spent two winters in extremely cold and windswept regions that were totally foreign to the men's customary places of residence. As well, the leaders of both expeditions are especially deserving of praise for having kept death and serious injury at bay in such harsh conditions.

But the two approaches to exploration are as distant as are the poles near which they were conducted. Campbell earns his respect through his leadership abilities and through his personal courage. He is unquestionably a self-reliant hero of the "true grit" variety, calm in the face of impending disaster and willing to face great risk and peril. We cannot but praise him for these virtues. Schwatka, on the other hand, commands respect for his astute adaptability, for his readiness to change his methods to those that will better suit the environment and make his time in the Arctic more comfortable. Campbell, for example, frequently records suffering from painful snowblindness, but Murray Levick, surgeon to the expedition, reported that the men were "very perverse about wearing goggles," a simple remedy that would have prevented the great discomfort and temporary incapacity. Similarly, while frostbitten flesh came to be routine during the winter in the ice cave, Campbell confides in his journal that several times his own frostbite arose because he insisted on being a "hard case" and refused to protect his face, even on windy days in the dead of an Antarctic winter. Schwatka, one senses, would have relied more on avoiding snowblindness and frostbite than on having the pluck to bear up under their consequences and go back for more.

The inadequacy of their European clothing works as a theme throughout Campbell's journals. Yet thirty years previously, Schwatka had demonstrated the warmth of clothing made from the hides of caribou, seal, and muskox, especially when constructed and worn in the style of the Inuit. And in matters of diet, Schwatka had learned a great deal that would have been useful to Campbell's party (ship's biscuit seemed a dietary necessity to some of the members). Although I generally dislike Stefansson's easy criticisms of the many arctic endeavours carried out in the British Naval tradition, I cannot help but recognize many places in Campbell's journals where a more accommodating perspective could have made the undertaking less onerous. But I should not wish to discredit Campbell's personal courage and charisma; his methods, like Scott's ponies and mules, were the unavoidable product of an ethos that dictated that imperialistic conquest could only be successful if the game were played according to the rules of the Empire.

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

CHURCHILL: POLAR BEAR CAPITAL OF THE WORLD. By MARK FLEMING. Winnipeg: Hyperion Press Limited, 1988. 96 p., 138 photos. Softbound. Cdn\$25.00.

In this book, Mark Fleming has assembled a delightful and informative photo-essay that captures the year-round essence of life in Churchill, Canada's arctic seaport. Poised as it is on the fringe of the true North, but with commercial links to the productive South, Churchill has always maintained strong links to the lives and ways of the inhabitants of the Arctic. In its short lifetime, this community of hardy people has successfully embraced a variety of lifestyles from the traditional northern occupations of hunting, trapping and fishing to the high technology of military and scientific endeavours. It has also maintained a valuable trade link for grain and other commodities while satisfying an ever-growing influx of tourists from the South. In prose that serves to knit together a stunning series of magnificent photographs of the four seasons of life in a northern port town, the author has successfully captured the paradoxical nature of Churchill. For the reviewer (an occasional short-term

visitor at all seasons over the past 25 years), each turn of the page evoked vivid memories of every facet of life in Churchill, from the ice floes in the bay to the one-sided trees on the shoreline, or from the fog-covered ponds in the harbour to the peculiar telephone-line tripods, which resisted the soil movement in this permafrost area. It is from this town and these links to the North (particularly from Pere Volant's superb museum) that the reviewer (and doubtless many other people) first came to admire the Inuit artisans in their ability to release from the ivory and soapstone rock of their surroundings their vibrant life and legend in exquisite carvings for which they are justly famous. These links to the North and the more familiar polar bear migration (and its attendant wildlife tourist "reverse migration") are described carefully in the book, as they affect the everyday life of the town's inhabitants. It is a sign of the thoroughness of the coverage of this pictorial essay that not one of the features of the reviewer's remembrance of Churchill is missing within it. The constant tribute to the indomitable spirit of its people both past and present is not misplaced in the text. The author returns again and again to his admiration for their zeal and to his thanks for their acceptance and friendship towards him and his family.

The book is not without fault, however. The text is somewhat disjointed as it presents a series of vignettes of both people and places, although within each section the prose flows smoothly, with an obvious twinkle of wry humour and perceptive judgement. The regular and irritating use of contractions (it's, didn't) is perhaps a consequence of the narrative style of the prose, while the spelling jumps from Canadian (kilometre, centre) to American (endeavor, harbor, chauffeured [!]) throughout the book. Captions to many photographs are either missing or misplaced in the margins of the book. Nevertheless, these minor flaws do not seriously mar an excellent if lightweight book about a fascinating town.

This book is highly recommended for both lay persons and scholars who are curious about the enigma that is Churchill. The book certainly meets the dual aims of the author in providing the short-term visitor with a glimpse of the year-round life of a unique northern community, while presenting a heartfelt and lasting tribute to its people.

T. Alan Clark
Physics Department
The University of Calgary
Calgary, Alberta, Canada
T2N 1N4

THE ALASKA ALMANAC. From the EDITORS of *The Milepost*, *The Alaska Journal* and *Alaska Geographic*. Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Publishing Company, 1988. 254 p., maps, charts, illus. Softbound. Cdn\$8.85; US\$6.95.

The *Alaska Almanac's* contents are a veritable iceberg's tip of what makes Alaska different from anywhere else, even in post-development 1988. This book is essential for three audiences: devotees of the Alaska Trivia game, visitors or newcomers to the state and anyone who has an interest in life in the North.

Consider this event from "the Year in Review (1987)":

Fish Collides With Jet: Just before April Fools' Day, a flying fish collided with an Alaska Airlines jet. It was no joke. The flight of a Boeing 737 was delayed for about an hour, while the plane was inspected for damage. "They found a greasy spot with some scales, but no damage," said Paul Bowers, Juneau airport manager. The fish was dropped by a bald eagle as the jet approached. The plane was taking off from the Juneau airport and about 400 feet past the runway's end, the jet crossed the flight path of the bald eagle, fish in talons. A mechanic was dispatched to the plane's next stop in Yakutat to check the plane. The eagle escaped injury [p. 242].

Tall tale that it seems, the incident illustrates all too well the contrasts between modernity and natural history and the continuing risks inherent in contact between them. The *Almanac* gives ample

evidence that what happens each year in the North is tied to natural and human processes that have been in existence for millenia and are not yet tamed or even subordinate to the technology and bureaucracy of our times.

The reader may choose any of 281 topics listed in the index (located at the beginning of the book, in place of a table of contents). To sample 1988 in Alaska, contrast "Alascom" (handles 70 million long-distance calls each year and provides long-distance service to every community of at least 25 persons) with "Akutak" (the native delicacy made of whipped berries, seal oil and snow) and then "Alcoholic Beverages" (Juneau and Anchorage have cut back the number of hours for serving alcohol allowed under state law, Fairbanks defeated a similar motion, and 68 communities have banned both the sale and importation of alcoholic beverages).

An unfortunate aspect of this and any almanac is the difficulty of checking facts and figures for errors and omissions; no references are provided. Furthermore, the content stands in isolation; there is little attempt to attach significance to the facts compiled or to describe their relationship to each other. Interpretation, however, is not the function of almanacs, and the interested reader can, of course, pursue questions or topics of interest through other sources.

The *Almanac* is biased towards the interests of recent rather than aboriginal Alaskans. This is evident in both the topic headings and such entries as "Native People," describing Aleuts, Eskimos and Athapaskans all in one and one-half pages. Following is a very brief description of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, omitting any mention of the revised legislation that has since altered the 1971 act or even the work in progress on revisions in recent years. (Other aspects of native cultures are covered under such entries as "Masks" and "Totems," flawed in that they give an external, materialist emphasis to native culture rather than a current and holistic view.) Even "Subsistence," a contentious issue for many non-native as well as native Alaskans, receives only a brief, albeit accurate description. "Hunting," in contrast, is longer and more detailed.

The diverse entries hint at innumerable fascinating and problematical stories. Some of the most moving are in the obituaries, which include a cross-section of native Alaskans and people who gave most of their lives to the state. The history encompassed in lives such as those of Bergman Kokrine, Paul Nagaruk and Howard Romig brings to life the 20th century in Alaska. Carrying mail by dog team, piloting aircraft to practice bush medicine and transferring ancient Eskimo skills into Nome's school curriculum are only a tiny sample of the challenges Alaskans have met.

E. Bielawski
Boreal Institute for Northern Studies
The University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
T6G 2E9

REVIEW OF METHODS FOR EVALUATING THE PHYSICAL CONDITION OF WILD UNGULATES IN NORTHERN ENVIRONMENTS. By JEAN HUOT. Québec: Centre d'études nordiques, series Nordicana No. 50, 1988. Published and printed simultaneously in English and French (back to back). 30 p. in English, 32 p. in French, plus review table, bib., index. Softbound. Cdn\$12.00.

This book summarizes and evaluates measurements of body condition in wild ungulates often used by wildlife biologists and managers. These measurements can be a sensitive way of monitoring both animal performance and the nutritional adequacy of range or habitat for a particular group or population of animals from "the animal's perspective." There have been many papers on body condition of wild ungulates, but little critical validation of common indices. In many species the relationships between indices of fatness and body fat are unknown. A review such as this can be of considerable value to biologists and managers.