

readers to draw their own conclusions and make their own judgments. The facts are all here. In August 1850, arriving from the Pacific Ocean, McClure had sailed HMS *Investigator* into Arctic waters through Bering Strait. After passing the mouth of the Mackenzie River, he left the coast and struck north between Victoria Island and Banks Island into Prince of Wales Strait.

The eastern end of that strait was (and often still is) blocked year-round by pack ice moving slowly south from the permanent polar ice cap. Halted and forced to winter over at that location, McClure sledged to the northeast coast of Banks Island. Looking out across an ice-choked channel 65 miles (104.6 km) wide (now called McClure Strait), he saw Melville Island, which William Edward Parry had reached from the Atlantic in 1819. This viewing, he would later argue, constituted his discovery of the Northwest Passage.

The next spring, after trying and again failing to escape Prince of Wales Strait, McClure retraced his path, retreating southwest and then sailing north around Banks Island. At Mercy Bay on the northeast coast, his ship became trapped by the same perennial flow of pack ice.

In 1853, with his ship still beset and his starving men suffering dreadfully from scurvy, McClure conceived a sinister plan to rid himself of his 30 sickest crew members, who insisted on consuming their short rations of food. He proposed to send them south and east in two separate sledge parties, both radically undersupplied. He and the healthiest men would remain with the ship to await further developments.

In April of that year, when he was mere days from enacting this plan, a sailor from HMS *Resolute*, trapped 60 miles (96.5 km) away, chanced upon the *Investigator*. As a result, McClure and his men sledged and walked across the frozen pack to that ship, which had entered Arctic waters from the Atlantic.

Having abandoned his own vessel under protest, McClure later argued that sledging across the pack ice to HMS *Resolute*, and then continuing home in another ship, constituted completion of the Northwest Passage. This argument carried the day—though as late as 1969, while trying to become the first vessel to pound through McClure Strait, the American ice-breaker *Manhattan* was forced to proceed instead down Prince of Wales Strait before continuing westward.

Stein's exhaustive research turns up a multitude of little-known nuggets. The expedition's primary objective was to obtain intelligence about the lost expedition of Sir John Franklin. To that end, Stein tells us, "Foxes were captured alive in traps, fitted with special copper collars stamped with the positions of [ships and supply caches] and then released" (p. 21), as in a previous expedition led by James Clark Ross. The hope was that one of these foxes would be caught by Franklin's men.

This expedition, like others, was supplied with gilt metal "rescue buttons" with words pointing to key locations. These were to be given to Inuit in the hope that they might

wear them when and if they came across any men from the Franklin ships. Then there were hydrogen-filled balloons designed for periodic release, which carried messages on pieces of brightly colored paper.

In Stein's account, many individuals spring to life—among them, first lieutenant William Haswell, tormented by McClure; Alexander Armstrong, the discerning ship's doctor; and Johann Miertsching, interpreter and missionary. The book is enhanced by black-and-white illustrations, clearly reproduced—many of them not well known. An epilogue treats the finding in 2010, by Canadian archaeologists, of the wreck of the *Investigator* where she sank, about 8 m below the surface.

Again, the word here is exhaustive. Stein has given us no fewer than seven appendices: weights and measures, notes on sources, crew list, extracts from Admiralty orders, notable sled parties, notes on map features, and polar crumbs (creation of the Arctic Medal). This is not a book for newcomers to the history of Arctic exploration. It is geared to those with a serious interest and will reward that audience by relaying virtually all there is to know about the McClure expedition.

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FIERCE CLIMATE, SACRED GROUND: AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN SHISHMAREF. By ELIZABETH MARINO. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2015. ISBN 978-1-60223-266-2 (pbk.). xii + 122 p., maps, b&w illus., notes, index. Softbound. US\$24.95.

Like many people, I'm familiar with the basic story of Shishmaref. As reported in the popular press around the world, the Iñupiaq village of Shishmaref, on the north coast of the Seward Peninsula in western Alaska, is suffering from rapid erosion that is undermining buildings and at some point will render the village site uninhabitable. In most reports, the erosion is linked to climate change, which has reduced the amount of sea ice that protects the coast from storm-driven waves. And the result, that the people of Shishmaref will have to move some day, is often held up as a warning to the rest of us about what's in store as the earth continues to warm, sea level continues to rise, and impacts continue to spread and accumulate.

This story has also been told in one form or another in various scientific publications and highlighted in various ways by academics and policy makers, as well as journalists. I have read about it in the newspaper, heard about it in scientific conferences, been to meetings where it was the main focus of discussion, listened to Shishmaref residents talk about their experience, seen videos of scientists

and faith leaders visiting the village, and even used photos from Shishmaref in my own presentations. The story has been told from many angles, typically emphasizing whichever aspect is closest to the heart of the person telling the story. So what are we to make of all this attention and angst surrounding a village of a few hundred people?

Enter Elizabeth Marino. She first visited Shishmaref as a reporter for a newspaper in Nome, the regional hub for the Seward Peninsula. Later she returned as a graduate student in anthropology, seeking to compile an “ethnography of climate change,” in the words of the book’s subtitle. The result is a concise, powerful, and illuminating description of Shishmaref’s experience as a community, as a media magnet, as the object of extensive planning and discussion, and as an exemplar of climate change.

In 100 pages of text, Marino manages to be both broad and focused. She is broad in the sense that she provides the context of the community and of the various disciplinary and ideological lenses through which Shishmaref’s situation is often analyzed, and focused in that she avoids long descriptions and digressions but instead moves directly and quickly to her points, which she supports with her own fieldwork, as well as reference to others’ work, and vividly illustrates with telling quotes and examples of what she means.

The first chapter sets the stage, noting the media attention as well as the main thrust of most coverage and the tension between the unique experiences of Shishmaref’s residents and the global cautionary tale within which those experiences are often placed.

The second chapter lays out the conceptual basis for evaluating hazards and vulnerability. I find most writing on these topics to be verbose and vague, if not actually opaque. Marino, in a few pages, does a masterly job of outlining what’s essential to understand and then applying her insights to the case of Shishmaref. For this alone, I am grateful to her for showing that an important concept can, with careful thought, be made clear and relevant to a particular case, and that Shishmaref cannot be understood without considering both the environmental and the social contexts that have created today’s community and the people who inhabit it.

The third chapter describes what we know about conditions in Shishmaref and its environment, comparing scientific publications with the observations of local residents. Marino asks whether Shishmaref is truly a story about climate change and also introduces a question many have asked: Why was the village built on an eroding island in the first place?

Chapter 4 begins to answer that question, laying out Shishmaref’s history and the ways in which colonialism has shaped it. Colonialism, like vulnerability, seems to be a subject that many writers have difficulty with. Once again, Marino comes through with a summary that is all the more admirable for its brevity, accomplishing more than many others have done in many times the number of pages. Instead of getting caught up in the ideological webs that seem to entangle many scholars, Marino simply lays out

how Shishmaref has come to be in its present location and form and how those experiences have shaped its people.

Chapter 5 tackles yet another thorny aspect of Shishmaref’s plight, which is that relocation has been discussed ad nauseam, but so far nothing has actually been done. The familiar culprits are here—bureaucracies with high turnover and little flexibility, high costs in relation to the number of people who will benefit, apparent indifference by many local residents. As should be no surprise by now, however, Marino again offers new insights and details that show how these familiar narratives are at best incomplete and at worst—particularly with any perception of local indifference—actually misleading.

In Chapter 6, Marino builds on all that she has presented, adding the core part of the ethnography, which is a review of the significance of location, relocation, and dislocation for the people in Shishmaref. She confesses to being uncomfortable in attempting to write about the views of others, but her closing plea—that we take indigenous peoples seriously—has an inevitability that makes it all the more powerful. How can we claim to take Shishmaref, and all the world’s Shishmarefs, seriously if we cannot bring ourselves to listen to what its people say, in their own voice, on their own terms?

The final chapter drives this point home, discussing the ethics of climate change, why we should care, some practical steps to be taken, and the conclusion that the costs of relocation are not, in the grand scheme of things, too high for society to bear.

Whether one agrees or disagrees with this conclusion (and I do not share her optimism that society will recognize what she regards as its obligations), *Fierce Climate, Sacred Ground* provides much food for thought. It is an academic presentation in one sense, but written to be accessible to any educated reader who wants to know more about Shishmaref and the meaning of climate change. I hope it will be read, not just by those who choose to learn more, but by the many who ought to learn more, who ought to take seriously all that Marino has to say.

Now, at the risk of ending a glowing review on a sour note, a short word to University of Alaska Press. Elizabeth Marino has written a wonderful narrative. Why is the physical book so unattractive? The margins are tiny, the font is small, and the book feels cramped. Fortunately, the power of Marino’s writing made me forget these drawbacks as I read, but readers should not have to overcome such obstacles, and authors should not have to see their hard work obscured by lack of attention to basic principles of book making. If there is a second edition, please do better. And for other works forthcoming, please do better.

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