

sources for his childhood, his family life, his education, or his early adulthood” (p. xv–xvi). In *Forty Years in Canada*, Steele devotes less than five pages to cover the first 22 years of his life. As a young man, he apparently had no exposure to First Nations. The one reference to the First Nations in his youth simply mentions that at the age of 11 his widowed father and family of six children “moved into Orillia, which was no longer the red man’s home” (p. 4). He fails to mention that the Indian Department in the mid-1830s had expelled the resident Ojibwe (Chippewa) from their reserve at Coldwater, just west of Orillia. Then at Orillia, or The Narrows, white settlers had petitioned the government to move the Chippewa off the village site, forcing a sale of the Narrows Reserve. The Chippewa were obliged to move east of Orillia to land earlier abandoned by settlers, a reserve known today as Rama. Steele’s lack of any contact with Indigenous peoples in his formative boyhood years might help to explain his lack of understanding of them. In Alberta, he worked to stamp out the Sun Dance, and he allowed the police to arrest without warrants Plains First Nations people off the reserve, despite the promises of Treaty Seven for freedom of movement.

In *Forty Years in Canada*, Steele narrated his rise from backwoods farm boy to major general. The book, devoid of any intellectual probing, revealed his devotion to duty and his belief in strict military discipline. Thanks to Macleod’s consultation of Steele’s numerous diaries and letters to his wife, all recently acquired by the University of Alberta, we meet a different Samuel Benfield Steele—the public figure away from the public spot light. Through his marriage at age 40 to Marie Harwood, the daughter of a prominent Québec family, Sam acquired a warm and stable family relationship. The Protestant NWMP officer crossed the barrier of religion to marry Marie, who was a devout Roman Catholic. His letters to Marie are the most important part of the Sir Samuel Steele Collection (p. 365).

The NWMP commander in the Yukon thrived on work (p. 179). In the Yukon, Steele worked constantly on mountains of official paperwork, often to 2 or 3 a.m. He still wrote lengthy biweekly letters to his beloved Marie.

Everything comes at a cost; as Macleod points out. Steele’s growing public recognition throughout North America fed his vanity. Upon reaching his early fifties, his hair began to grey. Anxious that others perceive him to be as young as he felt he was, he began to use hair dye (p. 238). Another development, he “indulged himself in one of his favourite activities, having his photograph taken” (p. 235–236). In the Yukon, a certain social snobbery emerged. In a letter to Marie he criticized William Ogilvie, the Yukon Commissioner, for he “goes to the dinner of any Tom, Dick, and Harry in the country who are only common people” (p. 181).

Steele left the NWMP in 1900 to head a British Army unit recruited in Canada to fight for Britain in South Africa. In the South African War, Lord Strathcona’s Horse attracted the higher command’s positive attention. This led to its commander’s appointment as a divisional commander in

the newly formed South African Constabulary. The semi-military police force spent the last year of the war pursuing the remaining Boer commandos. In his autobiography, Steele wrote that in the concentration camps established by the British during the war to house Boer women and children, the inmates were “well sheltered in good tents and they were well fed (p. 368).” In contrast, Macleod disagrees with this pro-British Army assessment and notes that they “died by the thousands due to incompetent administration” (p. 222). Steele had no intent in his biography of revealing that the British were in any way less than virtuous.

The book’s last chapter, “An Old Soldier Fades Away: General Steele, 1914–1919,” includes a review of Steele’s supervision during the war of a British military district in England occupied almost entirely by Canadians. Perhaps he never did achieve his lifelong goal of becoming Commissioner of the NWMP, but in his last years, he did become a major general and was knighted. Rod Macleod is to be warmly congratulated for his excellent biography of an important Anglo-Canadian public figure in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

REFERENCE

Steele, S.B. 1915. *Forty years in Canada: Reminiscences of the Great North-West, with some account of his service in South Africa*. Toronto, Ontario: McClelland, Goodchild & Stewart.

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COLD RUSH: THE ASTONISHING TRUE STORY OF THE NEW QUEST FOR THE POLAR NORTH. By MARTIN BREUM. Montreal, Quebec: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2018. ISBN 978-0-7735-5363-7. 252 p., maps, bib., index. Hardbound. Cdn\$30.95. Also available as an epub.

Martin Breum explores contemporary Arctic politics from a journalist’s perspective, with a focus on the Danish and Greenlandic context, in his new book *Cold Rush*. The book is a compendium of chapters selected and translated from Breum’s Danish books, and it feels like a collection of essays. Short, introductory paragraphs provide useful context for each chapter, but the book itself lacks an overriding, central argument. The chapters instead provide snapshots of various issues and events that serve to illustrate the Danish and Greenlandic approach to Arctic affairs in the past decade or so.

Although published by a university press, *Cold Rush* is not a scholarly contribution to the subject in a traditional sense. Breum is a well-known Danish journalist with

deep expertise on Greenlandic and Arctic politics, and the book is written with more literary flare than one gets with traditional academic prose. This is both the volume's strength and its weakness.

On the plus side, the book is an enjoyable and interesting read. As a journalist, Breum engages more actively with the people who make and implement Arctic policy, including a wide and impressive roster of Greenlandic and Danish politicians, diplomats, and military leaders. The reader is treated to personal accounts and impressions of important Arctic events that one rarely obtains through peer-reviewed journal articles. Amongst the topics most eloquently addressed are the signing of the Ilulissat Declaration in 2008, Danish efforts to map the Central Arctic Ocean seabed, and the struggle to lead Greenland closer to independence. The reader benefits from Breum's sober and nuanced understanding of the latter especially, as the quest for Greenlandic independence is a complex and emotional issue with far reaching significance for Indigenous nations around the Arctic and beyond.

Those expecting a scholarly analysis of Greenlandic-Arctic politics may be disappointed, however. Although Breum has mastery of the subject, there is no attempt to advance any kind of academic argument. More problematic is the complete absence of citations, even when speeches are quoted, facts are repeated, or other authors are referenced. The book has no bibliography—only a section on “Further Reading.”

In addition, the book includes journalistic embellishments that some academics may not be comfortable with. Writing for a broader, public audience, Breum allows himself to advance the popular narrative of an Arctic “race,” especially in the first chapter, covering the Russian expedition to the North Pole; the fifth chapter, entitled “Fears of China;” and the sixth chapter, on “Greenland—An Arctic Oil State.” Later in the volume, Breum shows more nuance on the subject of geopolitics, noting for example that “for the legal drawing of borders on the ocean floor, the actual North Pole carries no weight, but its cultural and symbolic value is hard to overestimate” (p. 80). In this way, the timeframe over which the various chapters are written is exposed; the rapid evolution of Arctic politics and Breum's understanding of them from the beginning of the Arctic boom narrative in 2008 to the eventual Arctic bust scenario in 2015–16 is interesting in itself, if unintentional.

This book is written for laypersons with a strong interest in the Arctic, and that audience will not be disappointed by this read. Breum provides insightful analysis and anecdotes across an impressive array of subjects. Although Arctic politics embodies the intersections among geopolitics, traditional security, Indigenous politics, resource economics, and nationalism, it is a rare author who can credibly address all of them.

But can this book be recommended to a scholarly audience? It can. Serious students of Arctic politics will benefit from learning about the personalities behind

decisions and events of historical importance of the region. Breum's description of the lead-up to the Ilulissat Declaration is probably the finest description of the event available. And non-Danish/Greenlandic readers will improve their understanding of the unique history, motivations, and domestic considerations that impact the ways in which Denmark and Greenland behave as Arctic actors.

Cold Rush does not promise an academic treatise, and it does not deliver one. What Breum does provide, as effectively as anyone writing on the Arctic today, is a sweeping review of the issues, people, and impacts of Arctic political change in the 2010s.

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OUR HANDS REMEMBER: RECOVERING SANIKILUAQ BASKET SEWING. By MARGARET LAWRENCE. Iqaluit, Nunavut: Inhabit Media, 2018. ISBN 978-1-77227-164-5. 120 p., colour illus., bib. Softbound. Cdn\$22.17.

This book is a practical guide to traditional grass basket sewing based on the know-how of women from Sanikiluaq, Nunavut. It is aimed at teaching the basic know-how to beginners, starting with techniques to collect the right grass, and ending with details on adding final aesthetic touches to the baskets. The author, a teacher who has been living and working in this community since 1988, became familiar with basket sewing in 1996 when she began as an instructor for a sewing project funded by the Nunavut Arctic College. This project, which was not initially supposed to focus on basket making, ended up providing the base of the revival of this traditional practice in the community.

The author begins by telling the story of this unplanned revival, thereby demonstrating the sometimes fortuitous contexts of cultural recovery and style innovation. The first chapter of the book is dedicated to the history and socio-cultural meaning of basket weaving in Sanikiluaq in the past few decades. The author explains how women involved in the initial project had to re-learn the practice by piecing together the fragments of knowledge that each of them had. Most of them already knew how to work with the type of grass required to make baskets, since other objects such as table mats, were still commonly made in the community. Some women had learned in the past how to make baskets and simply had to remember the gestures. But for others, it was a new skill to learn. The author mentions the technical challenges that the women faced when making their very