

**MUSKOX LAND: ELLESMERE ISLAND IN THE AGE OF CONTACT.** By LYLE DICK. Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2001. 615 p., maps, b&w illus., notes, bib., index. Softbound. Cdn\$34.95.

Let it be said at once that the broad sweep of this book is most impressive, and the scholarship is outstanding—the result of many years of research into published and unpublished sources, notably Canadian government reports and memoranda.

The theme of the book relates to the Inuit occupation of the Ellesmere Island region, and to the history of the Inuit-European relationship in the 19th and 20th centuries. The book is divided into four parts: the natural environment, culture, and human history; a history of events on Ellesmere Island, 1818–1940; the interplay of cultures and the environment, 1818–1940; and Inuit on Ellesmere Island, 1951–2000. A brief review cannot do justice to the scope of the book, and the following comments are thus highly selective.

Thanks to the work of the distinguished Danish archaeologist, the late Count Egil Knuth, we know that the Inuit had reached northernmost Ellesmere Island by at least 4000 years ago, and travelled thence to North Greenland. The author accepts that these early hunters followed the muskoxen along Knuth's "Muskox Way," and thus the title of the book is very apt. He describes in detail the methods used in hunting the muskox and other mammals and the technique of fishing through the ice for another very important source of food. At the exit of the Ruggles River from Lake Hazen, a current keeps the water open throughout the year, and this determined the siting nearby of an important Thule Inuit camp. However, it appears that, about 400 years ago, climatic change in the Little Ice Age or some other natural disaster overtook these early people. The country was abandoned and even forgotten in Inuit legend.

Then came the British and American ships penetrating farther and farther north via Smith Sound and into Nares Strait, which divides Ellesmere Island from northwestern Greenland. The author has provided the most succinct account yet of these early explorations, covering the fine seamanship of Edward Inglefield, Elisha Kent Kane, Isaac Israel Hayes, Charles Francis Hall, and Sir George Nares. The Americans made limited use of Inughuit guides and dogs to extend their travel, but not Nares, the first to reach the shore of the Arctic Ocean in his ship *Alert*, whose gallant sailors deserved better than the brutal drudgery of man-hauling while discovering a vast extent of new land. There followed the Greely expedition, overtaken by a tragedy that overshadowed its important geographical discoveries, most notably that of Lake Hazen.

In the 1890s there came upon the scene one of the most undaunted travellers in history—Robert Edwin Peary. Peary's expeditions, culminating in his three attempts to reach the North Pole, had a profound effect on the Inughuit of the Thule District in northwest Greenland, for he brought with him Western tools and equipment, including mechanical traps and rifles, as rewards for services. His

masterful exploitation of Native methods of surface travel, with the best dog-drivers of the district and the seamanship of that great ice-master Robert Bartlett, led to his claim to have reached the North Pole in April 1909. Lyle Dick wisely neither endorses nor denies this claim, which will forever remain in controversy.

American and, at the turn of the century, Norwegian exploration of Canadian territory led to government concern about the sovereignty issue. Vilhjalmur Stefansson, among others, recommended the establishment of RCMP and trading posts and further exploration of the North. In 1921, the Eastern Arctic Patrol was set up to provide an annual government presence in the North, and was charged with establishing RCMP posts. One was established the following year at Craig Harbour on southern Ellesmere Island, and another, a few years later, at Bache Peninsula on the east coast of the island. Over the years, there was close contact between these posts and Inughuit hunters from the Thule District.

For the inter-war years, the author describes the travels of three expeditions, two British and one Danish, to the Ellesmere Island region. All were based in the Thule District and employed Inughuit guides. The Oxford University Ellesmere Land Expedition (OUELE) of 1934–35, organized by Edward (later Lord) Shackleton, became the first to reach the ice cap of northern Ellesmere Island. The author provides interesting and little-known detail from government papers of Shackleton's later ambitious plans for a larger expedition to northern Ellesmere Island. His proposal met with as little enthusiasm as had his illustrious father's Arctic proposal to the Meighen government in 1920–21. However, David Haig-Thomas, a maverick member of OUELE, did organize a small expedition to Ellesmere Island in 1937–38. Government authorities were justifiably concerned that his activities would include illegal hunting of muskoxen—and in fact, they did. The Danish Van Hauen Expedition of 1939–40, similarly organized, marked the last bout of true exploration of the region, for within a year or two of the end of the war, the whole of the Queen Elizabeth Islands had been photographed from the air and subsequently mapped.

Thus, the author has rightly ended a chapter of history in 1940; he has omitted the voyages of Larsen's *St. Roch* in 1940–42 and 1944, which did not impinge on Ellesmere Island. Similarly, the scientific parties deployed after the war by the Defence Research Board and the Geological Survey of Canada had little or no impact on the Native people, and thus lie outside the author's brief, although he is kind enough to refer to this reviewer's small book on Defence Research Board field operations.

The author describes in detail the government's project in the 1950s to relocate Inuit groups from impoverished places such as Port Harrison, Hudson Bay, to sites that included Grise Fiord on southern Ellesmere Island. The project may have been ill-timed and ill-administered, but the resettled groups have probably benefited in the long run, for the Inuit are indeed a hardy and adaptable race.

In conclusion, the author has summarized the advantages to the Inuit (Inughuit) of Western technology, particularly rifles in the early 1900s and motorboats and snowmobiles in the 1960s. On the other hand, early contacts with Westerners also brought epidemics, which, for a time, inflicted considerable harm on aboriginal people. In reverse, the White man owes a great debt to the Inuit (Inughuit) for their expertise as travellers, and in many other ways. In recent times, for example, their empirical observations of the habits of muskoxen in the Grise Fiord area provided a sound basis for decisions on the management of the species.

This book is a treasure trove of information, and it is strongly recommended that it should be read—and read again—by all interested in the Canadian Arctic in general and in its Native people.

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**CHANGING TRACKS: PREDATORS AND POLITICS IN MT. MCKINLEY NATIONAL PARK.** By TIMOTHY RAWSON. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2001. 326 p., maps, b&w illus., bib., index. Hardbound, US\$39.95; Softbound, US\$24.95.

I never met Adolph Murie, a central character in Timothy Rawson's book. We corresponded in the late 1960s, in a successful effort to stop distribution of a postcard: it depicted a snarling wolf, with the caption: "These vicious beasts are among the most bloodthirsty in Alaska." In the early 1970s, when I hoped to visit with Murie at his home in Wyoming, I was a few months too late: he had died.

Over my extensive career as a wolf research biologist, my copy of Murie's *Wolves of Mt. McKinley* has become dog-eared and worn. His publication was a classic, the first wolf monograph, still full of insight today. After reading Timothy Rawson's book, I feel I know Adolph Murie—partial compensation for what I missed.

Rawson's intention was not to write a biography. Although Murie's youth is referred to early in the book, he is not a focal character until halfway through. Yet in any good biography, context is everything, especially when chronicling the evolution of ideas. Rawson does a thorough job describing the contribution of earlier thinkers, such as park biologist Victor Cahalane, Assistant Parks Director Harold Bryant, and academic Joseph Grinnell. These people, and those who held opposing views, are brought to life largely through reference to archival letters. The interactions among the protagonists make for fascinating interplay. But most importantly, they describe a dilemma faced by the U.S. Parks Service: whether to leave nature alone in the national parks, or to appease public pressure by killing predators.

That dilemma forced Murie, champion of expanded sympathy for the wolf based on ecological understanding, to set snares for the very wolves he had studied. While the "catch 22" in which he found himself—having to kill wolves in order to save them—is poignant, even disturbing, for the reader, Murie is never more than a central figure in the Parks Service's dilemma.

This dilemma makes the book much more than an early history (up until 1953) of predators and politics in Mt. McKinley National Park. It really describes an early clash between two worldviews: the utilitarian view of nature, as stock and commodity for us, and the ecological/evolutionary view that nature has intrinsic self-worth. Few issues in environmental management have proven to be such a litmus for the conflict in worldviews as the wolf. Rawson's description of events at McKinley is significant to the history of this conflict, one in which much more than the wolf is at stake.

Rawson sticks mainly to the swirling conflict over wolves and Dall's sheep at McKinley, played out by hunters, biologists, and bureaucrats. However, in the last chapter, "Evaluation and Consequence," he paints the wolf of today in new clothing—loved and respected to a much greater degree through the popular writings of scientists like Murie and the interest of cinematographers, beginning in the late 1950s with the Crislers' film and book *Arctic Wild*.

But much of the intrigue in the book, for me, stems from the surprisingly similar modern-day wolf-predator war that my wife, my students, and I have gone through ourselves, over wolf management in Ontario's Algonquin Park. Our research, like Murie's, was central to the conflict, and like Murie, we were castigated and praised. What the advocates of wolf killing wrote and said back in the 1930s and 1940s about wolves in McKinley is the script for today! On one side is an unbelieving incredulity by sportsmen's organizations (in McKinley's case, the prestigious Camp Fire Club) that anyone or any agency could champion a competitor for the harvest of big game. Theirs is the utilitarian view. Against that have ranged the arguments based on ecological research (used back then by the U.S. Parks Service and the American Society of Mammalogists) for leaving natural processes like predation alone in wilderness parks, out of respect and the humility of knowing that we can never understand ecosystems. That is the ecological/evolutionary view.

Those involved in wolf management in Alaska and Denali today would likely agree that much is still the same—although, as Rawson points out, a new element in the equation is the voice of conservation-oriented people all over North America. Nonetheless, the state still advocates considerable wolf killing, and so do many Alaskans. And at Denali (McKinley) National Park, recent intensive wolf research has shown that, on average, 14% of annual mortality in park wolves is caused by humans.

The last chapter leaves plenty of room for thought. Rawson provides evidence that the retirement or death of