

with the Qipisa and Utku who were living in small camps of extended family groups of around 20 to 35 individuals; Inuktitut was the primary language spoken in homes. A vastly different context obtains, for example, in the large village aggregations of Natives found in contemporary northwestern Alaska. Adults under the age of 45 speak English as their primary language, many work for wages, and the village infrastructure includes a church, schools, telephones, and cable television service. Briggs acknowledges the possible loss of these socialization practices when stating that “in complex communities, where different values and different styles of communication interact, the possibilities for misunderstanding are vastly increased...in two communities I have found women who did not recognize this genre of behavior and were shocked by it” (p. 7).

Except for Briggs’s writings, literature about Inuit socialization games is virtually nonexistent. This silence may reflect the diminished salience of traditional socialization under influences of modernization as suggested earlier; but I also wonder if this kind of questioning of children is not mentioned because it occurs within the most intimate circle of the family. This proximal interactional sphere is usually closed to researchers, who for the most part have also been *Qallunaat* (white people). Counted among the reasons to recommend the book, therefore, is the opportunity to witness the degree to which Briggs overcomes that weighty barrier.

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**THIS DISTANT AND UNSURVEYED COUNTRY: A WOMAN’S WINTER AT BAFFIN ISLAND, 1857–58.** By W. GILLIES ROSS. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997. ISBN 0-7735-1647-3. 258 p., maps, b&w illus., appendices, bib., index. Hardbound. Cdn\$34.95.

Although Gillies Ross has already earned the reputation as Canada’s foremost expert on Arctic whaling history, his latest book adds yet another landmark achievement. Based on the diary of Margaret Penny, written when she accompanied her husband on a whaling expedition to Cumberland Sound, *This Distant and Unsurveyed Country: A Woman’s Winter in Baffin Island, 1857–58* is the first nineteenth-century, social-contact history of the Eastern Arctic to be derived from a woman’s perspective. Ross has also incorporated accounts of the journey by Margaret Penny’s husband, Captain William Penny Jr., and Brother Warmow, a Moravian missionary who joined the expedition that year. As a result, this book not only provides an important

new insight into relationships between the whalers and the Inuit, but also records the first formal attempt to introduce Christianity to the Inuit of Baffin Island.

As in previous publications such as *Arctic Whalers, Icy Seas*, Ross has masterfully integrated personal observations and opinion with factual information. The introduction places this voyage within the broader context of Arctic whaling history and family biography. Then, in chronological order, each chapter in the main body begins with a replica of Margaret’s diary notes for several weeks or so, followed by Ross’s own background commentary and detailed explanations. Maps, illustrations, and photographs provide fascinating visual representations to support the narrative. Appendices contain more specific information. Finally, an epilogue relates relevant particulars about the family’s later years, the subsequent activities of Brother Warmow, and the decline of whaling in the Eastern Arctic. Few, if any, questions remain unanswered in the reader’s mind.

Margaret Penny’s experience was unique. Although several hundred American women are reported to have accompanied their husbands on whaling expeditions during the nineteenth century, primarily to southern climates, only a dozen British wives did so. Of these, three appear to have wintered in the Arctic, but Margaret was apparently the first European woman to earn this distinction. Her husband deserves equal credit for breaking with British tradition and allowing her to make the journey. Unquestionably, they were both unusual individuals.

William Penny Jr. was born into a whaling family, which explains in part his rapid rise through the ranks. He made his first voyage at the age of twelve, when he joined his father, Captain William Penny Sr., on a voyage to Greenland in 1821. Fourteen years later, at age 26, he was given command of his own ship. In 1840, he was credited with opening the prosperous Cumberland Sound fishery to Scottish whalers, aided by Eenoooloopik, a young Inuk he had brought to Scotland the previous year. In 1850, Penny was selected to lead a British Admiralty expedition in search of the Sir John Franklin party, an exceptional honour for a whaling master. Concerned about the growing number of American whalers wintering in Cumberland Sound, he applied for a Royal Charter in 1853 to establish a permanent commercial colony. Although rejected by the British government, he nevertheless gained sufficient backing in the form of the newly created Aberdeen Arctic Company to purchase the *Lady Franklin* and the *Sophia*, the two ships he had commanded on the Admiralty Expedition. Other ships were added to the fleet, with the objective of alternating the wintering-over years, thus maintaining a regular land base and continuity of Inuit assistance.

Margaret had planned to join her husband in 1853, and again in 1856, but concern for her young family had to take priority. Finally on 30 June 1857, she and Captain Penny sailed on the *Lady Franklin*, along with their 13-year-old son Billie. Captain Penny’s determination to create a

British colony was evident: he included a Moravian missionary on this voyage and constructed living quarters at two sites that year. Although Penny himself had begun the diary, his wife took over the responsibility after a few short weeks at sea, recording many sights and events that would likely have seemed trivial to the veteran captain. For this reason alone, the diary is invaluable.

Although Margaret slept on board for the entire time, she visited the Inuit camps with Brother Warmow or the ship's surgeon at every available opportunity. This was not an austere Englishwoman who remained aloof from the Natives, but one who personally fed them tea and biscuits, who learned Inuktitut in order to communicate with the women, who joined them in their celebrations, and who expressed heartfelt emotion when witnessing deprivation or moments of tragedy. Nor could she be described as shy and retiring. In the absence of her husband and his officers, Margaret did not hesitate to give orders when emergencies arose. If Captain William Penny Jr. was known for his bold and visionary leadership, his wife proved to be similarly endowed with the spirit of adventure, a kind heart, selflessness, and an inquisitive nature.

Margaret's diary entries were generally succinct, but occasionally interspersed with lengthy descriptions of events and individuals. She seemed intrigued by the Inuit, particularly the women, their clothing and living quarters, and their adaptation to a multitude of hardships. There is one gap in her entries—February to mid-May 1858—which Ross fills with general information about scurvy and the “winter melancholy” that afflicted most whalers at that time of year, adding details from Captain Penny's logbook and Brother Warmow's notes where relevant.

Margaret's first meeting with the Inuit was on 2 August at Naujartalik Harbour, where they discovered four women, two children, and a blind man in a state of near starvation after a whaling ship had departed with all able-bodied men, leaving the others behind to fend for themselves. Penny brought them on board and fed them. The ship's doctor provided medical assistance. Brother Warmow returned with them and spent several hours instructing them on Christianity. The next day, he was accompanied by Margaret:

We paid a visit to the Esquimaux hut & were received by her in a very graceful & kind manner for her condition. She presented me with a small seal skin. Upon the whole, her tent was not so uncomfortable, being covered in seal skin. She seemed well provided with deer skins for sleeping amongst. We had a delightful climb up the mountain. In little spots between the rocks there was all sorts of wild flowers, fine grass with a sweet smell like English hay, an immense quantity of crow-berries, blue berries, & cran berries, but they are not quite ripe yet. (p. 20)

Visits to Inuit homes and long hikes in search of flowers seemed to be favourite pastimes that summer.

While the men were building a house at Nuvujen, Margaret again visited the women, who seemed pleased to accompany her on long walks: “I was quite pleased to see the kind-hearted Esquimaux, how anxious they were to assist me up & down the rocks, one always going before to look for the easiest way, another keeping close & sometimes placing her foot firmly against a rock to make a step for me when I found it difficult” (p. 21). She was amused at how one woman closely examined her dress, and notably surprised the next day when the same woman came aboard for a visit, “dressed in a jacket & petticoat neatly made after the English fashion” (p. 22).

Leaving two men behind to supervise the whaling, the Pennys proceeded to the north side of the Sound in the vicinity of Kingnait Fiord and eventually to Kekerten Island, where they would spend the winter. Here Margaret described meeting Tackritow (also known as Tookoolito or Hannah) whom she had met several years earlier in England. She reported that Tackritow had “made a great improvement amongst the natives & herself quite civilized” and, a few days later, that a number of others had visited the ship, “dressed in their best clothes & very clean.” Margaret was impressed by their conduct and dress, stating that the Inuit here were “far advanced in civilization” compared to those at Nuvujen. She went on to explain that some of the clothing had been sent by directors of the Aberdeen Company and was particularly pleased that her husband had been a part of advancing these Inuit (p. 37–38). Tackritow and her friend Mary returned a few days later and were hired to clean the living quarters constructed at Nuvujen and Kekerten and to help collect Inuit from the area to work for the whalers.

Ross takes this opportunity to describe various occasions when Inuit were brought to Britain and placed on exhibit, initially by Captain John Parker in 1847. At that time, the expressed purpose was to gain popular support for a British colony, which might provide protection for the Native people from disease and exploitation as the Danes had done in Greenland. Parker's memorial to Queen Victoria was rejected as “unfeasible,” and his request to the Moravians to build a mission was also turned down because of “lack of funds” (p. 50). Six years later, Tackritow, her husband, and their son were also brought to England and “exhibited” to the public. They had the special distinction of having lunched at Windsor Castle, at which time they were presented to Queen Victoria. The Queen, according to her daily journal, viewed the “Esquimaux” as “her subjects,” and by her understanding, they had been brought over to raise money to assist their own people. She sent a cheque for twenty-five pounds (p. 55). There is no record of how much money was collected or how it was spent, but from Margaret's comments it appears that at least some may have been used to purchase English clothing—an important symbol of civilization in the Victorian Era.

According to Ross, Margaret's socialization at Kekerten was “spearheaded...with the potent British weapon, the tea party, entertaining so many that they had to attend in

rotation owing to the cramped quarters on the ship” (p. 137). This proved to be entertainment on a rather grand scale for a whaling ship, with Margaret herself at times serving 20 to 30 cups of tea. When visiting the ship, the Inuit women generally wore “their best skin dresses” (p. 138).

These excerpts provided the author with another opportunity to explain previous interactions between the Inuit and the whalers, and subsequent changes in trading practices. Apparently when Tackritow brought a number of English dresses home, she established a new fashion fad among the women of Cumberland Sound and inspired demands for new trade items, such as brooches, rings, brightly coloured cloth, and ribbons. Later, American whalers brought fancy bonnets and ball gowns, which the Inuit women wore at the dances held on the whaling ships. When these garments wore out, they were replaced with replicas made of fine caribou skins: a curious blend of old and new. A writer in the *Hull Advertiser* described Tackritow as wearing “a faded silk dress...a skin tunic, wellington boots of seal skin, and a Glengarry cap” (p. 138).

The above examples represent the depth of detail Ross has included in his commentary on Margaret’s diary. Other topics range from the various activities associated with whaling, to the problems of starvation and epidemics, to the mixed reception afforded the missionary (the apparent enthusiasm for Brother Warmow’s preaching, on the one hand, and the conflict he faced when attempting to intervene with spiritual traditions associated with death, on the other).

In addition to the insight provided by Margaret Penny, Ross’s extensive use of primary research and exemplary literary skills have produced an exceptional book. Essentially, this is a biography, a whaling narrative, and a social-contact history all rolled into one. As such, *This Distant and Unsurveyed Country* is of major importance for all scholars of Arctic history, who up until now have had to rely on a male perspective to explain the relationships between the whalers and the Inuit. Well written with ample visual aids, this book will also provide pleasurable reading for the less informed. It is a “must read” for anyone interested in nineteenth-century Arctic history.

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TO THE NORTH POLE: THE DIARY AND NOTEBOOK OF RICHARD E. BYRD 1925–1927. Edited by RAIMUND E. GOERLER. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1998. ISBN 0-8142-0800-2. 161 p., 3 maps, 56 b&w illus., bib. Hardbound. US\$19.95.

Polar controversies seem to be all the rage at the moment. Witness Robert M. Bryce’s 1997 book, *Cook and Peary*:

*The Polar Controversy Resolved*. This massive tome scrupulously explores the animated debate over whether it was Peary or Cook who first reached the North Pole and yet still manages to pour salt into the wounds of all concerned. Unfortunately, this scholarly but inflammatory book seems to have exerted an unwarranted influence on the marketing strategies of other publishers. When one reads the synopsis on the dust jacket of Raimund E. Goerler’s *To the Pole*, this book appears to be no exception to the “Cook and Peary genre” and the current craze for making the polar regions the focal point for acts of willful charlatany.

Ironically, the dust jacket brief proves to be as misleading as the most celebrated of polar frauds. It focuses disproportionate attention on the contested claim made by polar explorer and pioneer aviator Richard Evelyn Byrd (1888–1957) to have been the first person to fly over the North Pole. In fact, the author does not give this subject extravagant attention: the issue is confined to one chapter. In a book that presents selections from Byrd’s diary and notebook of 1925–27 and encompasses three of Byrd’s five expeditions, the 1926 North Pole flight is far from being the book’s only point of interest.

Indeed, one of the more intriguing aspects of Byrd’s diary is that it records his transition from little-known polar explorer to international celebrity. It begins with Byrd’s involvement in the Greenland Expedition of 1925, records the 1926 flight to the North Pole that brought him fame, and terminates with the transatlantic flight of 1927 that established him as a popular hero. Through all of these transitions, Byrd seems to have remained relatively untroubled by what he called “the hero business” (p. 52).

In bringing forth an edited version of Byrd’s diary, Raimund E. Goerler has striven for a representation that possesses “clarity” (p. 4), that is an “accurate representation of the original” (p. 3), and that is underpinned by relevant historical context. The resulting book offers a brief biography of Byrd, three chapters devoted to the above-mentioned expeditions, an epilogue detailing the remainder of Byrd’s life (1928–57), and two appendices: a chronology of Byrd’s life and the navigational report of his North Pole flight.

The author sets himself a task at which it would normally be difficult to excel in a book of only 161 pages. The informative but unremarkable biography of Byrd is followed by the three “expedition chapters” that contain the mainstay of the diary material. In each of these, the author has employed a similar structure. Rather than synthesize Byrd’s diary material into a history of the expeditions, Goerler begins each chapter with a short but competent history of an expedition, which forms the introduction to Byrd’s relevant diary entries.

In general, the technique works well, offering the reader the opportunity to compare Goerler’s omniscient narrative with Byrd’s first-person account of events. However, without recourse to the diary itself, it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which the diary entries may have been chosen to coincide with the author’s account of the expedition and