

region. I would recommend this book to anyone with an interest in the archaeology or the peoples of the North.

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**WILD RIVERS, WILD LANDS.** By KEN MADSEN. Whitehorse, Yukon: Lost Moose, the Yukon Publishers, 1996. Henderson Book Series No. 24, published in association with the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Toronto, Ontario. 112 p., 5 maps, colour illustrations. Softbound. Cdn\$29.95.

From the publishers of *The ORIGINAL Lost Whole Moose Catalogue* and other titles including *Skookum's North: The "PAWS" Collection*, and *Law of the Yukon: A Pictorial History of the Mounted Police in the Yukon*, comes a new book that in similarly quirky and engaging northern style celebrates four watersheds in the great northwest. *Wild Rivers, Wild Lands*, a personal reflection by Whitehorse writer, photographer, and environmentalist Ken Madsen, sweeps readers into one paddler's perspective on the white water of wilderness preservation in the Alsek-Tatshenshini, Stikine, Peel, and Skagway watersheds.

At one level, this handsome, softcover book is a high-action kayak adventure tale. Madsen is a modern-day explorer and a great storyteller. And when his accessible prose is illustrated by his artfully wrought photographs, the arm-chair adventurer will be whisked about as close to wild water escapades as one can get without actually getting wet. Madsen's description of leading the first Canadian descent of Turnback Canyon on the Alsek River is particularly fetching (in a glad-I-wasn't-there sort of way). The author and his crew are trying to shoot this canyon, in which people have died, while a photographer from *National Geographic* hovers directly overhead. Madsen writes: "As I skirt a pair of holes, a blast of spray blinds me. My kayak stalls as it crests a breaking wave, then the helicopter hurricane lifts my bow and blows me upstream, back into the trough of the wave. I close my eyes and lean forward. I dig my paddle into the current and haul the kayak over the wave. When I pass under the chopper, I'm blown through the slot as explosively as a cork from a bottle of cheap champagne" (p. 23).

Skill aside, the machismo of these exploits is countered, happily, by accounts of paddling on less turbulent waters with family and friends. These human aspects of the book show quite clearly how one person's passion for adventure and love of the wild can be passed on to family and young companions by sheer force of example. Other Canadian children would be lucky to have a pair like Madsen and his partner Wendy Boothroyd to take them adventuring, to learn from experience the importance of family and the lasting lessons of living in nature. They are a potent example.

At another level, *Wild Rivers, Wild Lands* is a portrait of intense dedication to wilderness preservation derived from experience on the land, and a heartfelt request to join the Yukon Wildlands Project, an initiative to preserve these wilderness areas. Here, the passion of experience is not so attractive. In the introduction (p. 1), Madsen spits: "The Yukon government is killing wolves near here. Gunning them down from planes, trapping them, snaring them. Like European gentry, the politicians don't want to feed "their" caribou and moose to wild carnivores. Loggers are itching to clear-cut the forest we are walking through. On slopes above Kluane Lake, the scars from mineral exploration slash across alpine meadows. ...Wildness in the natural world is wholeness. Wildness doesn't need to be improved by development. It doesn't require our moral approval or legislative authority. Wildness is."

There are certainly other views on these matters, not represented in this book, which acknowledge the contradictions that colour the nexus of wilderness and development. Pretty picture books like this can tend to commodify and compartmentalize wilderness, and it's more than a little curious that this call for "an entirely new vision" is dressed up on apparently unrecycled paper with pages of gloss-coated photos. And, for a freelance writer/photographer who makes his living from wilderness reporting, Madsen runs the risk in writing this book of appearing to preserve a narrow self-interest in his drive to preserve these wild lands. This call to action would have been more credible had Madsen, however tangentially, been a little less condemnatory of people involved in development and acknowledged the industrial effects of his own consumption—for example, the inevitable damage to land, water, and air incurred through the construction of his kayaks and high-tech camping equipment.

But these are minor quibbles. Ken Madsen's passion and demonstrated environmental action—he was a central player in the establishment of the Tatshenshini-Alsek Wilderness Park—offset the contradictions. And, while the imagery in this book does have its share of sunsets and wild animals, bordering occasionally on cliché, the text, however naive or idealistic, is grounded in experience and is quite refreshing in its candour. Madsen calls, eventually, for balance as he enjoins others to act. He shows how the Yukon Wildlands Project is linked to the World Wildlife Fund's Endangered Spaces Campaign and, in pointing out that large carnivores need huge ranges and that wild creatures must be free to move to keep populations healthy, he calls for wild lands to be linked to "restore the ecological richness and native biodiversity throughout North America" (p. 109).

In the end, it is the emotion of firsthand experiences on the land that empowers this book. Madsen understands that the best way to learn to care about these rivers is to actually paddle them, but—failing that—he has made a credible stab at packaging the river experience in a way that just might move people to act, either by mounting their own expeditions or by writing a cheque to one of the conservation organizations listed at the back. This book is full of the sights and sounds of the great northwest, and what it lacks in inclusive

reasoning, it makes up for in the affirmation that “experiential scholarship”—time and travel on the land—is an essential driver of effective environmental action. The challenge, as Madsen acknowledges, is to find balance and ways to cooperate for the good of humanity and the good of Nature—before all wild rivers and all wild lands are gone forever.

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**SHINGWAUK'S VISION: A HISTORY OF NATIVE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS.** By JAMES R. MILLER. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996. 582 p., b&w illus., maps, bib., index. Hardbound, Cdn\$70.00; Softbound, Cdn\$29.95.

Among the numerous justice-seeking recommendations emerging from its exhaustive report on the history of relations between the First Nations and the rest of Canada, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) placed Native residential schools near the top of a lengthy list of society's culprits. The *Globe and Mail* noted that “the Queen and Parliament should issue a royal proclamation acknowledging mistakes of the past and committing governments to a new relationship...[by conducting] a wide-ranging public inquiry... into the origins and effects of residential schools” (22 November 1996, p. A8).

Why, of all the arenas of five centuries of engagement between Native and non-Native Canadians, should residential schools be attributed such consequence, even notoriety? Where might those seeking to understand the significance of the Commission's reproach start their personal investigation of this pivotal subject? The answer to both questions can best be found by reading J.R. Miller's recent and extensive study, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools*.

In the opinion of this reviewer, there has not been—nor is there likely to be—as complete an inquiry and as trustworthy a standard for evaluating the Native residential school phenomenon as this exhaustive and engaging treatise. Miller researched the voluminous primary residential school documentation in both church and government archives. In addition, he interviewed dozens of living Native attendees of the schools throughout the land. He participated in celebrations, conferences, and healing sessions, as well as other formal and informal events. The author largely succeeds in presenting a balanced, three-part assessment of why the schools were set up, how they functioned, and their current consequences.

Miller describes the purpose of his book as “an attempt to provide an overview of the history of residential schools as *one facet* (italics mine) of the more general history of relations between indigenous and immigrant peoples in the territory that became Canada” (p. ix). Yet, by probing the

story of the schools, readers gain a keener understanding of the dubious dynamics that have characterized half a millennium of cross-cultural engagement.

This study juxtaposes the philosophy and motivation of educational administrators and teachers (both secular and religious) and the views and experience of the students for whom the schools were purportedly intended. It should not be surprising that frequently intentions were at variance with results and what was provided was resisted, rejected, or, at very least, unappreciated.

The author accents and distinguishes an important motif from the outset: Native peoples consented to involvement in the residential schools essentially to obtain an education. Many (though by no means all) Natives, realized they had to adapt in order to function successfully in a world that was changed by the inevitable encroachment of Euro-Canadian society. They saw education as the primary means of preparing themselves for this adaptation. However, their intentions were not generally understood or appreciated; the broader Canadian society considered assimilation of Natives into the larger culture, not their vocational training or schooling, to be the primary reason for government involvement in the schools. For the churches, on the other hand, the religious conversion of the “pagan Indian” to an awareness of a “higher” civilization and eternal life, not primarily learning for this life, was the main reason to participate.

Traditional Native pedagogy focused on the “Three L's”—looking, listening, and learning—while the vast majority of the non-Native schoolteachers relied on the standard “Three R's.” Euro-Canadian educational philosophers were almost universal in their disrespect for time-honoured Native learning environments and ways of teaching: non-Natives simply assumed their own methods and systems to be the best. The resulting psychological trauma experienced by the students, their families, and their descendants led many Natives to their deaths, or to chronic personal and social dysfunction—an inability to live effectively in either society.

The author claims repeatedly that the motives of the First Nations peoples were more authentic than those of government and church. With some obvious and notable exceptions, many of his examples broadly reinforce this perception. That is one of the more significant contributions of the book.

One positive and ironic side effect was that the residential schools were responsible for the early training of many Natives who subsequently became political and cultural leaders. This fact supports the author's strange but nonetheless legitimate conclusion that, in spite of the generally wrong-headed and failed nature of the residential school system, a certain number of “success stories” emerged, with a variety of educational benefits accruing to Native people who were able to make the cross-cultural transition. These were exceptions, however, not the rule.

Who was responsible for the damage done, and who should compensate? The author concludes that the Native people were essentially victims and not to blame for what happened. While a number of the major denominations involved in the schools have attempted apologies and healing