

their field data-collection activities, or perhaps even access social media links (Facebook or similar) that follow up on the work of the Census.

Those reservations reflect a growing concern about the efficacy of traditional published media more than a criticism of this particular book. This book has taken a great first step in making the initial outcomes of the Census of Marine Life more accessible. But so much more can and should be done with Census results if we are ultimately to make the case for expanding marine science investments and improving scientific input for decision making about the future use of our oceans.

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**PIKE'S PORTAGE: STORIES OF A DISTINGUISHED PLACE.** Edited by MORTEN ASFELDT and BOB HENDERSON. Toronto: Natural Heritage Books, Dundurn Press, 2010. ISBN 978-1-55488-460-5. 325 p., maps, b&w and colour illus., selected bib., index. Softbound. Cdn\$29.99; £17.99.

Before the establishment of commercial bush plane services in Canada's North in the 1930s, the East Arm of Great Slave Lake was arguably the primary gateway to the Barren Lands, that huge triangle of mainland Arctic tundra west of Hudson Bay. Access to the tundra plateau above the forested East Arm lay along a handful of ancient aboriginal portage routes that more or less followed the courses of the rivers that drop steeply into Great Slave Lake. The easiest and most travelled of these was Pike's Portage—actually a series of portages linking a chain of small lakes—avoiding the canyons and waterfalls of the nearly impassable lower Lockhart River. From Artillery Lake at the opposite end of Pike's Portage, there is easy access via upstream travel on the Lockhart to three of the five major barrenland rivers draining into Hudson Bay and the Arctic Ocean—the Thelon, Back, and Coppermine.

Pike's Portage and the other nearby portage trails that serve as entry points to the Barren Lands were used for centuries, and probably for millennia, by nomadic aboriginal peoples following the annual migrations of the life-

sustaining caribou herds. Beginning in the 19th century, explorers, sportsmen, adventurers, surveyors, and trappers followed in the footsteps of their aboriginal predecessors, most of them accompanied by Dene and Metis guides. Today, Pike's Portage bears the footprints of small family groups from the nearby Dene community of Lutsel K'e who make spring pilgrimages to the "Old Lady of the Falls" on the Lockhart River. In summer, the only evidence of travel is likely to be left by the most intrepid of canoeists en route to the tundra interior. But in late winter and early spring, this trail is packed hard by snowmobiles carrying Dene hunters from Lutsel K'e in search of caribou and muskoxen.

Soon Pike's Portage will lie inside a large new national park, Thaidene Nene, "Land of the Ancestors," that is now being championed by the people of Lutsel K'e. However, as I write this review in the late winter of 2010, there is a good possibility that a hydro transmission line will soon be built through the heart of the park to the new diamond mines in the Barrens to the north. This transmission line would cut across the eastern tip of Great Slave Lake at Reliance or across Pike's Portage and the lower Lockhart River—all sacred places for the Lutsel K'e Dene.

*Pike's Portage: Stories of a Distinguished Place* tells what we know of the aboriginal history of this key travel corridor and acts as a showcase for the more recent stories of those who followed these legendary trails leading from Great Slave Lake into the great unknown. As co-editor Morten Asfeldt tells us in the Introduction, this region "has a rich and diverse history that is partially captured in the published narratives, but nowhere were they gathered together providing a focused and comprehensive sense of its storied past. In fact, some stories weren't published at all" (p. 26). The objective of this book was to bring these stories together under one cover.

The book is not meant to be an exhaustive collection of stories about historically important figures who have lived in and travelled through this area. The editors have selected an eclectic representation that includes British Navy explorer George Back from the 1830s; Canadian surveyor-explorers J.W. Tyrrell and Guy Blanchet; eccentric John Hornby, who starved to death on the Thelon River; muskox-seeking sport hunters Warburton Pike and Buffalo Jones; the Metis guides of the ubiquitous Beaulieu clan; famous author Ernest Thompson Seton; James Anderson and James Green Stewart, who canoed the Back River in 1855; early 20th century trappers Gus D'Aoust and Helge Ingstad; Dene hunter and trapper Noel Drybones; modern-day homesteaders Dave and Kristen Olesen; and Roger Catling, the last wolf hunter. There are also chapters on the recent archaeological discoveries in the area and on present-day life in and around Lutsel K'e.

Fifteen authors contributed their efforts to this book, including both editors, several academics, and well-known writers of popular books on northern history such as David Pelly, Gwyneth Hoyle, and James Raffan. I particularly enjoyed the delightful chapter by John McInnes, recreational canoeist, who has travelled and unravelled the lesser-

known rivers and portage routes west of Pike's Portage. Also, Ingrid Urberg of the University of Alberta has written an especially compelling chapter on the life of Helge Ingstad, who began his adventures in Canada in the 1920s as a barrenland trapper and went on in later life to discover the Viking Age site at L'Anse aux Meadows in Newfoundland. In 1970, I had the honour of meeting Helge Ingstad on Baffin Island, where he was still searching for evidence of Viking presence.

Pike's Portage is named for Warburton Pike, an English gentleman adventurer and hunter who crossed it in 1890 with aboriginal guides. Although Pike is romanticized in this book, today many would challenge his racist attitudes and stereotypes of aboriginal people, as well as his misinformation about his Beaulieu family guides. Unflattering stories about Pike still linger in the North, especially among Beaulieu family members.

*Pike's Portage: Stories of a Distinguished Place* is a well-written book with appropriately detailed maps and an interesting display of period photographs. Although there's not a lot that is new here for aficionados of northern history, many will find this a fascinating read about the people who have inhabited or passed through this storied place.

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THE GREAT OCEAN OF TRUTH: MEMORIES OF "HUDSON-70," THE FIRST CIRCUMNAVIGATION OF THE AMERICAS. By PETER WADHAMS. Ely, Cambridgeshire: Melrose Books, 2009. ISBN 978-1-907040-30-6. vi + 378 p., map, b&w and colour plates, appendixes, index. £15.99.

This is an interesting, if unusual, book. Its nominal intention is to describe the 1969–70 scientific cruise of the Canadian Government vessel, the CSS *Hudson*, which (if one neglects the northern Canadian Arctic Archipelago) circumnavigated the American continents. The "Hudson-70" cruise was arguably the last of the long-duration oceanographic expeditions that explored the unknown oceans, which the author considers to have been initiated by the 1872 HMS *Challenger* cruise. Certainly, oceanographic research expeditions no longer span durations of a full year or longer; however, by 1969–70, the world's oceans were no longer quite the blank scientific slate that they were at the time of the *Challenger* voyage. Instead, new technologies were overtaking grand ship-based scientific investigations. The introduction of new observational methods provided global surface coverage from orbiting satellites and enabled long-term measurements (i.e., over months or even years) at widely spaced sites from moored ocean equipment, requiring the use of ships only for deployment and recovery purposes.

This book was written nearly 40 years after the end of the *Hudson-70* cruise. The author, now a well-known and esteemed polar oceanographer, was fresh out of his undergraduate training in physics at Cambridge University when he joined the *Hudson-70* crew as a "scientific assistant." He participated in the entire cruise, and his account is highly personal and often very subjective. It informs and enlightens its readers on the scientific content and background underlying the yearlong expenditure of human and technical resources. He is particularly good at concisely summarizing the key physical and marine biological processes that were studied as part of the cruise's oceanographic and other geophysical programs, using instruments and methods that are now mostly outdated. The author also updates these understandings on the basis of research carried out in the 40 years since the cruise ended. His outline of the origins of the cruise and his own inclusion on its scientific staff tells us much about the Canadian ocean science community around 1970. Wadhams' descriptions of the deep ocean working environment are vivid, and the writing gets particularly intense in his meticulous portrayal of sights and events experienced on his frequent trips ashore in Argentina, Chile, and Peru, illustrated by spectacular colour photographs taken during those landfalls. Given the author's distinguished career in polar oceanography, it seems somewhat surprising that the text devoted to the Canadian Arctic regions of the Beaufort Sea and the confined channels of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago is limited to brief and very high-level descriptions of major oceanographic and ice features. Overall, the author demonstrates a remarkable grasp of details of events and states of knowledge from times 40 years in the past. A few minor details are somewhat distorted, such as the date of the massive landslide east of the town of Hope, British Columbia, which occurred in 1965 rather than 1955.

Lest the reader anticipate being restricted to a snapshot of ocean science as it was carried out and understood in 1970, it should be noted that much of Wadhams' text is best classified as a mixture of travelogue, exposé, and "coming of age" reminiscence. It brims with the excitement of a nascent but knowledgeable and appreciative traveler and frequently offers vague echoes of Watson in *The Double Helix* and Holden Caulfield in *Catcher in the Rye*. The personal and professional reminiscences included in the writing, contributed 40 years after the described events, retain the tone and, yes, the priorities of a libidinous, gregarious, 21-year-old male. This approach is refreshing and highlights an often-unappreciated impediment to a young scientist's powers of concentrated thought. On the other hand, female readers are likely to notice that the physical "attractiveness" of all women encountered (scientists or not) is inevitably assessed, while males escape such scrutiny. Likewise, at times, judgements on the wisdom of the *Hudson's* route and activity priorities seem to be inordinately coloured by the opportunities they offered for Wadhams' social and recreational pleasure. This is a nagging inconsistency, given the book's often-unflattering treatment of *Hudson-70* ship