

accounts, becomes a man who married for money and, when it ran out, abandoned his wife to join the army. William Cross, the alcoholic engineer who was the first to die, acquires character through his gruff journal entries, usually colorful knocks at Greely, whom he labeled “Old Stubbornness” or “STN (our shirt-tail navigator)” (p. 157, 173).

Guttridge’s fairness and the depth of his historical research are striking. If there is a drawback to *Ghosts of Cape Sabine*, it is that the 80-year-old author has no personal experience with the Arctic he writes about and thus makes many small errors. Dutch Island lies within a few metres of mainland Ellesmere, not two miles offshore; the photo caption of Pim Island misidentifies Cape Sabine; and contrary to what Greely himself believed, the small seabirds the party hunted at Camp Clay were not dovekies: they were guillemots. More importantly, the author overlooks key issues in the tragedy because of his lack of familiarity with the area. In February 1884, when Sergeant Rice and the Greenland native Jens Edward tried to cross Smith Sound to reach Greenland for help, they were stopped by open water. Guttridge assumes, with earlier writers, that the Sound simply did not freeze over that winter. But Pim Island lies at the fluctuating edge of the North Water Polynya. Some years an ice bridge forms right at Cape Sabine, but often a detour to the north is necessary. In 1914, under ideal conditions, the American explorer Donald MacMillan (1918:51) crossed from Greenland to Pim Island in six hours, following the same line attempted by Rice and Edward in 1884. Yet in 1909, Frederick Cook (1912:434) claimed to have been forced to make a 60-mile detour north of Cape Sabine before finding ice. Cook’s numbers are rarely reliable, but it is not uncommon for the ice bridge to begin around the north end of the Bache Peninsula, some 35 km beyond Camp Clay. From their lookout knoll, Greely’s men would not have been able to see the solid ice in the distance. Guttridge seems unaware of the vagaries of the Smith Sound ice bridge and simply assumes, as Greely did, that if the direct route didn’t work, nothing would. Several such points prevent this book, good as it is, from being definitive.

Nevertheless, one cannot help thinking that, if as meticulous a person as Guttridge had been in charge of relief efforts, all members of the expedition would have come back alive.

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**BARK, SKIN, AND CEDAR: EXPLORING THE CANOE IN CANADIAN EXPERIENCE.** By JAMES RAFFAN. Toronto: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd., 1999. ISBN 0-00-638653-9. xiv + 274 p., maps, b&w illus., notes, index. Softbound. Cdn\$19.95.

*Bark, Skin, and Cedar* will surely make for informative and inspirational reading for housebound canoe enthusiasts this year. Unlike conventional canoe books that narrate individual journeys or explain how to handle a canoe in whitewater, Raffan’s new book is an amiable, discursive ramble across Canada, with little more holding the volume together than a desire to share excitement about canoes. *Bark, Skin, and Cedar* meanders from anecdotes about personal experience, through a study of competition in the canoe-building industry, toward an understanding of the values gained from experiencing the world from a canoe.

The book is organized into 11 chapters, each one developing some aspect of the canoe in Canada. Its organization is spatial, moving from Labrador in the first chapter, then sweeping through the Maritime provinces, westward through Quebec and Ontario, and west and north as far as the Bering Strait. One of the best features of the book is that, as the geographical focus shifts, Raffan takes a different tack on how he explores the canoe and its cultural trappings. For example, in the initial chapter, he lays down some basic canoe-building terminology as he discusses the development of the Gander Bay boat and its similarities to the Beothuk canoe. The next two chapters, which focus primarily on the Maritimes, largely concern themselves with Micmac birchbark canoes and with aboriginal stories about the origin of the canoe. Chapter Four addresses the development of the canvas-covered canoe and the cedar-strip canoe through an interesting and informative history of three major canoe manufacturers—the Chestnut Canoe, the Old Town Canoe, and the Peterborough Canoe companies. The fifth chapter, entitled “Lachine,” evokes the heyday of the North West Company, especially attending to Governor George Simpson and his ceremonial use of the canoe, which Raffan ties to a discussion of the Canadian voyageur and the 1967 Centennial Voyageur Canoe Pageant. Chapter Six provides anecdotes related to canoe-camp life in Quebec and Ontario and to the values those camps strive to instill in young modern-day voyageurs. The next chapter, a refreshing shift from well-worn

descriptions of fur trade routes along the Saskatchewan and Churchill Rivers and over the Methye Portage, focuses on the evolution of the York boat and its relationship to the canoe. Chapter Eight shifts north to spin familiar tales about John Hornby, George Douglas, John Franklin, J.B. Tyrrell, George Grinnell, and others who have put the canoe to good use. In the next chapter, when the focus shifts to the Bow River, Raffan explores the way the canoe has been used to market commodities as diverse as the Canadian Pacific Railroad, beer, and tourism. Chapter Ten looks at the construction and historical development of the Haida canoe, with considerable attention paid to Bill Reid's involvement in the revitalization of that craft in the 1980s. This chapter also briefly addresses the Dragon Boat Festival, often associated with Chinese populations in Vancouver. The final chapter shifts north once again to consider the arrival of aboriginal peoples from Asia, and to explore what notions they brought with them about canoe design.

This skeletal outline should give prospective readers not only an idea of how the book is structured, but also a sense of the interesting variety of approaches. Raffan's breadth of information about canoes and related subjects is apparent, and his enthusiasm is contagious. In fact, his description of recanvassing his 16-foot Chestnut Pal nearly caused me to attempt the same on my own Pal, until I put the book down and came to my senses. It is probably worth pointing out here, however, that *Bark, Skin, and Cedar* is not an instructional book. It does not explain how to build or recanvas a canoe; it does not describe how to load or handle a canoe in turbulent water; nor does it explain such basic differences in design as those between a river and a lake canoe. Rather, the book is designed to entertain and inspire those who are already enthusiastic and relatively well informed about this traditional vessel. In this respect, *Bark, Skin, and Cedar* falls in line with a few other titles, notably *Nastawgan: The Canadian North by Canoe and Snowshoe* (Hodgins and Hobbs, 1985) and *Canexus: The Canoe in Canadian Culture* (Raffan and Horwood, 1988), which have a similar objective of promoting the sorts of experiences associated with canoes and canoe travel. Those books, however, are collections of essays, whereas Raffan's new book has the advantages of a sustained and focused account by one voice.

Raffan has done an excellent job of pulling together diverse bits of information—some historical, some technical, some creative. As is often the case when one reaches so widely, errors are inevitable. Susanna Moodie and Catharine Parr Traill were Samuel Strickland's sisters, not his daughters (p. 73). The Gander River is not "named after its abundance of geese" (p. 5), but after a figure in the British Colonial Office. "Redwoods" do not grow in British Columbia (p. 209 and 214). And no matter how hard one tries, a 26-foot Haida canoe cannot be paddled from the Queen Charlotte Islands to Prince George (p. 217). But I do not think *Bark, Skin, and Cedar* was intended as a scholarly work: in spite of its rather substantial endnotes,

it contains neither bibliography nor index, suggesting a target audience in search of entertainment, information, and inspiration. Certainly Raffan provides those.

The book's subtitle and the cultural realm it addresses are perhaps not as fulfilling as is the author's obvious command of lore about the canoe itself. There is no question that the canoe has been instrumental in the economic development of Canada, and it indeed remains a wonderful recreational vehicle for five or six months of the year in Shield country, especially in the Kingston/Peterborough area. Yet, enthusiastic as I am about canoes, the pleasures they can evoke, and the importance they bear to Canada's traditions, I cannot help but wonder how much they continue to embody modern *Canadian* experience. True, many of my neighbours have a canoe stored in some out-of-the-way passage alongside the house or garden shed, but even more of them have a mountain bike or two in the garage. Calgary is a long way from the Canadian Shield and all the fantastic paddling opportunities it offers, but Canadians immigrate to Calgary in huge numbers every month. Canada has grown increasingly urban, a nation populated by people with no cultural ties to the French voyageurs who portaged the *canots du nord* or the Orkneymen who rowed the York boats. Canada has been seeking a unifying image for many generations, and while the canoe might have been a strong contender in the past, I am doubtful that it will serve as a useful icon very far into the twenty-first century.

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- MOUNT LOGAN, Volume 1. By GERALD HOLDSWORTH. Calgary, Alberta: The Arctic Institute of North America, 2000. ISBN 0-919034-95-0. Single CD-ROM, comprising text with bibliographic references, colour and b&w photographs, maps, sketches, and video/audio sequences. Cdn\$45.00 + s&h.

Mount Logan, at 5957 m Canada's highest mountain and surpassed in height in North America only by Denali (Mt. McKinley), is one of the world's largest massifs and the epitome of the high-altitude arctic alpine environment. Besides being a world-class mountaineering objective, it