

Reviews

THE TRANS-ALASKA PIPELINE CONTROVERSY: TECHNOLOGY, CONSERVATION AND THE FRONTIER. Peter A. Coates. 1991. London and Toronto: Associated University Presses. 447 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-934223-10-6. £39.95.

The proposal of whether — and where — to construct the Trans-Alaska Pipeline was initiated and carried out amidst heated debate. Interested voices included, among others, state residents who wanted to 'open up' Alaska for development, oil companies, a myriad of federal agencies (who were by no means of one opinion), commercial fishermen, Native Alaskans engaged in subsistence hunting as well as commercial fishing, sports hunters (and their guides), conservationists, preservationists, people who had moved up to Alaska to 'get away from it all,' and people who had never seen Alaska, but who wanted to preserve a sense of pristine wilderness as part of their American heritage. To a significant degree, the rhetoric used by virtually all of them drew upon an image of Alaska as 'the final frontier,' using it to validate their quite divergent goals. Coates' work places this controversy in a broad historical perspective, examining the metamorphoses of the concepts of 'frontier' and 'wilderness' as they have been applied to Alaska during the past century. Although he never allows the reader to fall into simple dichotomous assumptions, Coates analyzes in particular the use of these images by those he calls 'boosters' (people who feel Alaskans' destiny is to develop in relative freedom and for whom 'wilderness' signifies unlimited development potential) and their opponents. He traces their rhetoric — as well as their tactics — from the debates over ratifying the purchase of 'Seward's Folly' in the mid-nineteenth century, through the construction of the Alcan Highway in 1942, the successful opposition to proposed atomic testing known as Project Chariot (1958–63), and the likewise successful resistance to the proposed Rampart Dam during the 1960s. All of these reveal themes that enhance one's understanding of the processes leading up to the laying of the first section of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline in 1974.

The work is well-researched, carefully documented, and, I believe, unique in its focus. I, an Alaskan resident who was involved in a number of events related to oil development between 1980 and 1986, learned a great deal. Coates clearly delineates differences between 'conservationism' (natural resources should be conserved through controlled use), 'preservationism' (the preservation of wilderness has value in and of itself), and, more recently, 'environmentalism' (which posits a need to preserve wilderness as an environment that affects global ecology), examining the different values they have placed on 'wilderness' in relation to their opposition to 'boosterism.'

The author exposes the complexity of issues involved

in decisions regarding 'development' and resists the temptation to simplify. In that I am not sure who he has decided the audience is meant to be, the 'through-line' seemed to lose focus at times; the result is a sometimes confusing welter of information for the non-specialist and an occasionally puzzling lack of discussion for the expert. A single throw-away line in the chapter on the Rampart Dam, for instance, revealed that the Canadian government opposed the project on the grounds that it would threaten an existing treaty between the US and Canada that protected the latter's unimpeded access to the sea. This must have had some importance in the Federal government's position; to introduce such information only to ignore any of its implications is simply frustrating to the reader.

In his conclusion, Coates mentions recent work that treats 'the frontier' as a zone of conflict involving 'cultural technology,' thus moving 'frontier' away from a model of 'wilderness' toward one of social interaction, in this case between indigenes and Euro-Americans. If he is going to support this model, and I certainly find it convincing, then he needs to be braver about including Native Alaskans in his narrative. He has clearly done significant research concerning Native Alaskan activism, particularly in relation to Project Chariot, but he hesitates to use it to its fullest extent. The intensity of indigenous political activism, and the general absence of 'inhabitants' (who would be Native Alaskans) in much of the rhetoric concerning 'wilderness' are both too germane to Coates' argument to sidestep by saying it is beyond the scope of the work to include them. Coates does include enough information to convince this reader that he knows a great deal. I only wish he had addressed the issues a little more openly and at greater length. One of the strongest points of the book is its potential to broaden the concept of 'frontier' beyond that of 'west/rest' confrontation. His entire story is the tale of conflicting cultural models; the frontier demarcates borders not only between Native Alaskans and 'others,' but also between conservationists, preservationists, boosters, and environmentalists. In this, he introduces an argument of serious importance. (Barbara Bodenhorn, Pembroke College, Cambridge CB2 1RF.)

THE HISTORY OF PLACE-NAMES IN THE BRITISH ANTARCTIC TERRITORY. Geoffrey Hattersley-Smith. 1991. Cambridge: British Antarctic Survey (Scientific Reports No.113). 670 p in 2 volumes, 2 line figures and 3 maps in a back pocket, soft cover. ISBN 0-85665-130-3. £48.00.

'There are 4350 officially accepted place-names in the British Antarctic Territory, and 1414 unofficial or redundant names in various languages have also been recorded, together with about 14 000 synonyms. Since 1945, the

Antarctic Place-names Committee, of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, has been responsible for providing advice on the adoption of place-names by the administrative authority for the Territory. The background to this Committee, its work and objectives are described, and some account is provided of the work of similar place-names authorities in other countries. A review is then given of the evolution of the place-names in the British Antarctic Territory as a result of voyages of discovery, sealing and whaling operations, and scientific and other expeditions, from the time of William Smith's voyage, in 1819, to the present. After a consideration of principles in place-naming, the names are then treated systematically according to prescribed rules and listed alphabetically. Each entry gives the latitude and longitude of the feature, the locality with reference to features named on the included maps, and (in chronological order) details of discovery, mapping and naming, and references to first publication of the name and of any synonyms. Cross references link the synonyms to these entries. About 1700 published and unpublished sources in eight main languages are listed in the references.'

This is the author's abstract; it cannot be bettered as a concise account of the contents of the work. That it is a work of scholarship is readily apparent throughout, emphasized by the concise accounts of the expeditions, particularly the earlier ones. Many of the accounts include aspects of the expeditions that, being pertinent only to place-names, are often excluded from the more popular accounts, if available at all. The list of references demonstrates the thoroughness of the research. The maps are sufficient for their purpose, but obviously it would require a companion set of volumes of maps to show the position of every name. The principles and practices of the British Antarctic Place-names Committee are described in some detail. These will provide a valuable guide to anyone proposing new names, and adhering strictly to them will ensure a greater degree of success. They will also provide an excellent foundation for any nation about to embark on the business of place-naming in Antarctica, and existing practitioners might also be encouraged to regularize some of their own practices to provide a greater degree of conformity. This is not to say that all the British practices are necessarily the best. The definition of geographical terms, as used in British Antarctic Territory, is a useful glossary. It can also be used to demonstrate the occasional fallibility of committees: when a prominent but relatively level ridge projecting into a glacier (a 'river' of solid water) was proposed as a 'point,' the Committee rejected the generic part of the name on the grounds that a point is a coastal feature and substituted the term 'needle,' because it is a projection (despite a needle usually being a vertical, not a horizontal, feature). The name '.... Needle' is still uncorrected.

The entries themselves, which form more than 80% of the text, are remarkably comprehensive. Many of them, particularly the more recent ones, provide a potted biography of the individual so honoured, often including years of

birth, useful for determining the ages of one's contemporaries! Definitions are given for 'Antarctica' (the continental block excluding the islands of the 'Scotia Ridge') and 'The Antarctic' (the area south of the 'Antarctic Convergence'), terms that, although different, are all too often used synonymously. Also, 'Greater' and 'Lesser' Antarctica are given precedence over 'East' and 'West' Antarctica, although, sadly, the latter pair are overwhelmingly used in the literature today despite their obvious shortcomings. The system of group names within an area often makes fascinating reading, such as the features within 'Pioneers Escarpment' that commemorate the names of individuals who developed equipment and techniques used in the polar regions, such as F.W. Lindqvist, the Swedish inventor of the Primus stove. Popular misconceptions of the origins of some names may be rectified: 'Funk Glacier' was named not for a sledger who retreated but for Casimir Funk, who developed the theory of vitamins. On the other hand, 'Fullastern Rock' was named for very obvious reasons, and 'Hell Gates' defines a dangerous passage used by sealers and described in the *Antarctic Pilotas* 'where many boats and lives have been lost.' Some names illustrate the humour of the polar explorer: 'Weather Guesser Nunataks' indicating high regard for the meteorological department; 'Stinker Point' using the vernacular expression for the giant petrel.

Due acknowledgement is made to Brian Roberts, who began the work, but it is very largely the author's own extensive research and he is to be warmly congratulated on a magnificent achievement. Only a saint could reach perfection, and there are inevitably some errors, although those noticed by this reviewer are insignificant. The only criticism is the strange point of division between the two volumes, not just in the middle of an entry but even in the middle of a bracket!

These volumes form an essential work of reference for any polar library and, indeed, for many others. No student of toponymy should be without a copy. It is not, of course, a book to read cover to cover, but once picked up it is impossible to put down. The price will be excessive for some, but it is tremendous value for money and could never reflect the true cost of the research or even the production. Here is a concise history of the explorers and their explorations in British Antarctic Territory seen through the application of place-names. Finally, in this case, the answer to Juliet's question 'What's in a name?' is quite simply 'an awful lot.' (P.D. Clarkson, Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research, Scott Polar Research Institute, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

THE QUIET LAND: THE DIARIES OF FRANK DEBENHAM. June Debenham Back (editor). 1992. Bluntisham: Bluntisham Press; Harleston: Erskine Press. 207 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 01-85297-037-5. £24.95.

Frank Debenham, CBE, is best remembered by the academic world as the founder of the University of Cambridge's Department of Geography and as its first profes-