

rade, and who ran the 1151-mile Iditarod dog-sled race 13 times. Clearly Vaughan is a determined man, with a penchant for unusual experiences, and unlikely to let a plane crash stand in the way of a mountain. He didn't, of course.

One would, perhaps, secretly hope that a man with a mountain named in his honour would be larger than life, and Vaughan certainly justifies such a hope. His successful ascent of his own personal mountain clearly endorses the adventurous spirit characteristic of his entire life. To the old he advises that they 'throw away their armchairs,' and this is doubtless also good advice to those much younger in years than he. So by all means feel free, and throw away your armchair, but not before you've had a chance to sit down one last time and read this remarkable book. (Ian Higginson, Centre for History & Cultural Studies of Science, Rutherford College, University of Kent at Canterbury, Canterbury, Kent CT2 7NX.)

**THE ICE-AGE HISTORY OF ALASKAN NATIONAL PARKS.** Scott A. Elias. 1995. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press. x + 150 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 1-56098-424-4. \$US16.95.

*The ice-age history of Alaskan national parks* is the first in a series of books geared towards the 'general reader' concerning the glaciation of the Rocky Mountains and western national parks of the United States. Scott Elias has, in this short volume, developed an engaging writing style that guides the reader admirably well through a number of subjects ranging from the broad aspects of Quaternary science to the palaeogeography of the Alaskan national parks. Assuming that the reader is one with an enquiring mind, but without any prior knowledge of the last ice age or how Alaska was transformed during this period, then the book will achieve its goal and provide an interesting simple overview of the glacial history of three

regions within Alaska.

This is evidently not an academic textbook, and does not claim to be so. Neither is it a tourist guidebook; there are too few field examples and illustrations for it to be so. However, Elias should be commended on this attempt to educate the lay person in Earth processes, landforms, and palaeobiology that relate to Alaska during the last ice age. As a consequence, this book will probably only be of interest to those who have visited (or will visit) Alaska, and those who have an affinity with the region.

The volume is split into two sections. The first part introduces aspects of palaeoecology that are relevant to the discussion within the second section. The theories behind, for example, the causes of ice ages, dating methods, and palaeoarchaeology are explained well, using simple terminology and examples. When a scientific word is introduced, the reader is referred to a useful glossary at the end of the book. There are a number of cartoon-type illustrations that are light-hearted and yet instructive, and fit well within the text.

Section two deals with how the ice age affected the national parks. Because of the overview style of the book, field examples are kept to a minimum, and the discussion remains in a general context. However, as any Earth scientist can testify, field examples are necessary in order to teach and discuss geoscience effectively. Because of this, I believe the book to be too generalised to be of any use as a student text.

I thoroughly enjoyed reading this little book and would recommend it to tourists, in order for them to gain an understanding of the ancient Earth-system pertaining to the Alaskan region, before they visit the area. This book may well help such readers to appreciate the Alaskan national parks rather than merely wonder at them. (Martin J. Siegert, Centre for Glaciology, Institute of Earth Studies, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, Dyfed SY23 3DB.)