

Book Reviews

ANÓOSHI LINGÍT AANÍ KÁ: RUSSIANS IN TLINGIT AMERICA: THE BATTLES OF SITKA, 1802 AND 1804. Nora Marks Dauenhauer, Richard Dauenhauer, and Lydia T. Black (Editors). 2008. Juneau: Sealaska Heritage Institute; Seattle and London: University of Washington Press. xlix + 491 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 978-0-295- 98601-2. £19.00; \$US35.00. doi:10.1017/S0032247409008572

This is the fourth in the important series ‘Classics of Tlingit Oral Literature’ published by the Sealaska Heritage Institute in Juneau, Alaska. The aim of this volume is to present documents setting out works of Tlingit oral history in parallel with Russian and other documents referring to the same events, the two ‘battles’ of Sitka that took place in 1802 and 1804. The first of these was the culmination of an increasingly tense situation that developed after the turn of the century in southeast Alaska between the Russians and the Tlingit. There had been a series of relatively minor skirmishes between the two caused by infiltration by Russian parties into traditional Tlingit hunting grounds, and the situation was apparently exacerbated by murders precipitated by the Russians and largely executed by Aleuts employed by them, and their abuse of gravesites. The situation may also have been made worse by the activities of British and American traders who threatened to cut off the Tlingit from supplies obtainable from these traders unless the Russians were removed. Sitka had been established shortly before, and on the afternoon of Sunday, 15 June 1802, there were in the settlement 29 Russians, and three Englishmen from ships, together with fewer than 20 Aleuts, women, and children. The Tlingit attack seems to have been a straightforward frontal assault that succeeded. There were some 42 survivors, mainly women and children.

This attack caused great shock to Aleksandr A. Baranov, the officer responsible for Alaska, not only because of the losses of materiel but more because of the loss of some of his best men, including Vasilii G. Medvednikov, the commander of the fort. Baranov immediately resolved on revenge, but this took some time to arrange because of his lack of transport. Eventually, he arrived off Sitka on 2 September, where he found a Russian naval vessel, *Neva*, under the command of Iurii F. Lisianskii, sent to assist his operations. A rather badly planned and poorly executed Russian assault was beaten off by the Tlingit, but negotiations between the two sides ensued and these resulted in the abandonment of the post by the Tlingit on 7 October 1804. It appears the Tlingit took the fairly extreme step of killing babies and dogs in order to prevent them from making a noise during the evacuation. The Russians reoccupied the establishment,

and the ensuing peace negotiations resulted in an outcome that lasted until the Russians left Alaska.

The volume itself is a most impressive work of scholarship. After an exhaustive, and it has to be said remarkably discursive, preface, covering some 50 pages, one reaches the presentation of the documents themselves. Here the reader might receive a surprise because it must surely have occurred to him or her to wonder if there could possibly be sufficient documents and transcriptions of oral literature on the two battles in question to fill a volume of approximately 500 pages. The reader is swiftly disabused of this because the editors have taken a very broad-brush approach indeed. Each document has its own introduction by the editors and its own critical apparatus. The first section presents documents relating to the first contacts between Russians and Tlingit including, of course, the first landing in Alaska by Aleksei Chirikov’s expedition in 1741, from which 15 men did not return. Nine documents are presented, of which one is a transcription from a Tlingit tradition bearer covering the first encounter, and another two, demonstrating the catholicity of the editors’ selection, cover La Pérouse’s visit to Lituya Bay in 1786.

There are nine such sections and one only arrives at the 1802 battle once one has reached page 157. Here we find eight documents, of which two are Tlingit oral testimony from A. P. Johnson, the remainder being reports, eye-witness testimonies, etc. The 1804 hostilities are covered in an equivalent way. This time there are 10 documents, of which a rather higher proportion are oral testimony. The penultimate section, entitled ‘And life goes on: 1805–1806, 1818’ covers the aftermath of the whole business, and the presentation is wrapped up by two bilingual texts.

But that is not all; there are no fewer than 12 appendices, of which probably the most interesting are a statement of the casualties of the conflicts and the biographies of the Tlingit tradition bearers whose testimonies are presented in the book.

The work is lavishly illustrated. There are 23 colour plates, some of which are photographs of various recent ceremonies relating to the battles, and that seem to be of only marginal relevance to the purpose of the book. There are also 17 maps and charts contemporary to the period being described, and some of these are a feast for the eyes, for example La Pérouse’s chart of Lituya Bay, 1786, or Lisianskii’s chart of Sitka Sound, 1805. There are, in addition, 62 figures, several of which are photographs of the tradition bearers and their families. In addition there is a glossary of Russian, indigenous, and technical terms, together with a comprehensive list of references and a full index.

The presentation of the work is excellent and it has clearly been prepared up to a quality and not down to a price, as is so depressingly common nowadays.

One doubts whether there is much more that can be set forth on these events and the editors' presentation is exhaustive, and indeed, rather exhausting. This reviewer wondered towards the end of reading the book, whether a little tighter editing might have made the whole work more accessible for the more general reader rather than for the specialist, for whom it is clearly

essential. But there is no doubt concerning the diligence of the editors with regard to unearthing the obscure written sources and in obtaining access to the oral ones. This book is an essential basis for any study of the events in question. (Ian R. Stone, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

GEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF GREENLAND: FOUR BILLION YEARS OF EARTH EVOLUTION.

Niels Henriksen. 2008. Copenhagen: Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland (GEUS). 272 p, illustrated, hard back. ISBN 978-87-7871-211-0. £44. doi:10.1017/S0032247409008560

This is an imposing book in many ways; a large format, beautifully illustrated and produced volume. It has been well translated from the Danish original that was published in 2005. It is aimed at a general readership with an interest in earth science and is excellent at explaining in layman's terms current geological concepts and theories relevant to the geology of Greenland. It is also sufficiently detailed to be of interest to the more knowledgeable reader, and includes references and further information to help those wishing for a deeper and more technical understanding.

Although more than three-quarters covered by permanent ice and snow, the exposed bedrock around the periphery of Greenland is largely free of vegetation and weathering, affording an unparalleled opportunity to study the evidence of the earth's crustal processes. Dr Henriksen has managed to achieve a skillful balance between the huge and sometimes embarrassingly clear amount of visual evidence available, and the need to condense and simplify this to the point where it makes a sensible and accurate story for the general reader.

Opening with a concise overview of the geological time scale, he uses this and his encyclopaedic knowledge of the region as a basis for organising information gathered

from the whole of Greenland; hence the sub-title of the book. Brief summaries of the field methods employed in such a vast and inhospitable area, and of the evolution of the present day landscape, lead on to the core of the book which works through all the major geological eras represented in Greenland. Structures and rock types are illustrated with excellent clarity and their relation to global features and events are explained, retaining a very good geological perspective overall. The many high quality photographs have something to show the tourist and general visitor to almost any part of the island, as well as illustrating relevant geological features described in the text. Colour is often an important aid to the field geologist, and the excellent colour reproduction in these illustrations is particularly worthy of note.

There is extensive description and analysis of features of the Precambrian eras for which southern Greenland is particularly famous. The fold belts and sedimentary basins of Archaean, Proterozoic and Phanerozoic age are all given a thorough descriptive treatment and the complex features of the Caledonian orogeny are described and explained. Younger sedimentary and volcanic formations are also described in detail and linked to global events and the development of the north Atlantic Ocean, and there are equally thorough sections on the current ice age, offshore research and exploration, and commercial mineral and hydrocarbon operations.

Although expensive in pounds sterling, this is an excellent and thoroughly recommended book for all but the more advanced research worker. (D.W. Matthews, Drummore of Cantray, Cawdor, Nairn IV12 5XY).

CLIMATE CHANGE AND GLOBALIZATION IN THE ARCTIC. E. Carina H. Keskitalo. 2008. London and Sterling, VA: Earthscan. xii + 254 p, hardcover. ISBN 978-1-84407-528-7.

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The publication of the Arctic Council's Arctic climate impact assessment, *Impacts of a warming Arctic*, in November 2004 was the culmination of sustained scientific focus on global climate processes and the resulting impacts in the latter part of the twentieth century and the early part of the twenty-first century. Research on impacts of climate change, and particularly that dealing with human impacts, has increasingly moved to consideration of how humans are able to adapt to change, leading to a surge in publications on adaptation and adaptive capacity.

Climate change and globalization in the Arctic is the latest in a series of publications on climate change, vul-

nerability, and adaptation from Earthscan. The goal of the current publication is to demonstrate the vulnerabilities that local stakeholders in the Arctic consider that they are subject to and the adaptations that they can institute. This is undertaken from a political-science perspective using case studies in the Scandinavian north, with the intent of adding a European dimension to vulnerability studies of the Arctic. More accurately, however, the book only addresses Arctic stakeholders in selected northern European regions rather than across the circumarctic. The title of the book is somewhat misleading in two ways: it does not cover the circumarctic, and it is not well integrated.

The book comprises two introductory chapters, three case study chapters, and one concluding chapter. Chapter 1 defines and discusses the fundamental concepts of vulnerability, adaptive capacity, and globalization that frame the remaining chapters. These emphasize social