

REVIEW

MANUSCRIPTS IN THE NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM

[A review by Harry King* of *Guide to the manuscripts in the National Maritime Museum, Vol 1. The personal collections*, edited by R. J. B. Knight. London, Mansell, 1977, 234 p. £12.50.]

Since its foundation over 40 years ago the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich has acquired by donation, loan and purchase one of the world's finest collections of manuscripts relating to the sea, seamen and maritime history, occupying over 2 750 metres of shelving. As well as Royal Navy, Merchant Navy and other groups' administrative papers the museum's collection is rich in personal papers, to which this volume of the guide is devoted. A second forthcoming volume will cover the remaining categories. The text of the guide consists of 300 short biographies of individuals with brief descriptions of their papers, the length of each description being dependent on the extent of the manuscript material available. Only a small proportion of the collections are of direct polar interest—names like Belcher, Bougainville, Franklin, McClintock, McClure, Nares and Pelham Aldrich are examples. Other information provided includes the provenance, the length of shelving occupied and references to published sources. Chronological, general and ship indexes provide additional access to the contents of the collection.

Researchers who already have access to standard works of biographical reference may well feel that more space could usefully have been given to the detailing of the manuscripts and less to the biographies. Others, less well served by reference libraries, will welcome the convenience that this synopsis of seamen and their papers provides.

LITTLE BEARD OF UNGAVA

[A review by Jack Cram* of André Steinmann's *La petite barbe*. Montreal, Les Editions de l'Homme, 1977, 314 p, illus. \$8 Canadian. Published in French.]

When André Steinmann, OMI, arrived among the Inuit of Ungava in 1938, he found them little changed from their ancestors as reported by Turner in 1894. Today, these same Inuit are an active, organized political and cultural force in the affairs of northern Quebec. Little has been written describing the period of change, so this book is an important social document by an observer who for 40 years has lived intimately with the Inuit. It is also the autobiography of one man's struggle to balance the humility and subservience demanded by his vocation with the impetuosity and arrogance of his own nature.

The role of the priest as hunter, carpenter, trapper, dentist, dog runner, doctor, musician, magician and nurse is described with happiness or sorrow, but always with authenticity. During an epidemic of measles in Koartak, the only job for the priest was to build and fill childrens' coffins. Rage against the vagaries of government welfare is suppressed during a description of famine in Wakeham Bay when the author suggests, with Don Camillo-like directness, that the Lord might have done worse than to share with his followers the secret of the loaves and fishes.

The Inuit emerge as tough, stubborn but infinitely patient individuals. Each one hunts when he feels it is time. Each one shares the proceeds of his hunting because he chooses to and not because of any atavistic communal urge. They teach and are mentors to the young priest because they want to be of help to a stranger and not through either fear or awe.

Like many controversial innovators, André Steinmann has seen his ideas seized, developed and institutionalized by others. Having founded the first school in Povungnituk, he saw it totally absorbed into the federal school system to the point where he was forbidden to teach in it because

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