

Reviews

RELOCATING EDEN: THE IMAGE AND POLITICS OF INUIT EXILE IN THE CANADIAN ARCTIC. Alan Marcus. 1995. Hanover and London: University Press of New England. xvi + 272 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-87451-659-5. \$US19.95.

Relocating Eden is a book about the movement of people: the relocation during the 1950s of two distinct groups of Inuit (Eskimos) in Canada's northern lands. The author, Alan Marcus, sets the scene in the first 52 pages with an examination and interpretation of past Inuit history, then devotes the remainder of the book to the relocations themselves, and their aftermath.

One of the relocations discussed in this book is that of the Ennadai Lake people. Ennadai Lake is in the barren lands of the Keewatin District in the Northwest Territories, about 200 km inland from the west coast of Hudson Bay. The culture of the Ennadai Lake people in the 1950s has been described as that of the Stone Age, little affected by their few contacts with the outside world. They were part of a larger group known as Caribou Eskimos because they depended on caribou for satisfying practically all their needs — food, tents, clothes, boats, sewing materials, and tools.

Relocating Eden describes the Canadian government move in May 1957 of all 59 Inuit at Ennadai Lake to the Henik Lake region, some 200 km to the northeast. Civil servants cited by Marcus indicated at the time that more effective administration of the Inuit was a major goal of this relocation.

Unfortunately, during the autumn preceding the relocation, the caribou changed their annual migration route, depriving the people of their traditional source of food, shelter, clothing, and tools. This began an extended period of hardship for Inuit throughout most of the Keewatin District, not for just those at Henik Lake.

In the next two years, 1957–1958, the caribou again failed to follow their traditional migration route, and conditions worsened drastically among the Inuit of the Keewatin District, including those at Henik Lake. The relocated Inuit were now also farther from possible emergency help, because they had previously been close to a manned government weather station. By early 1959, starvation had begun to appear in several parts of the Keewatin, including Henik Lake, where two murders also took place, brought on, it would seem, by the hopelessness of the situation. More deaths by starvation and exposure followed. *Relocating Eden* chronicles this human tragedy with pathos.

When they became aware of the disaster, government officials acted. The remaining Inuit of Henik Lake were evacuated to existing settlements on the western coast of Hudson Bay, where they and their descendants live today.

There is no doubt that the relocation was not a success. It did not make the administration of the Inuit more effective as anticipated. And the evidence presented by Marcus supports the case that the relocation certainly did not help to prevent the human tragedy at Henik Lake, a tragedy similar to others played out in a number of Keewatin Inuit communities during those same lean years. Indeed, the government most likely unwittingly contributed to the severity of the tragedy by moving the Inuit away from the weather station, a potential source of emergency assistance that could have warded off starvation.

There is a vast difference between the relocation of the Ennadai Lake people in 1957 and the relocation of the Inukjuak (or Port Harrison) people in 1953 and 1955. There is also a curious difference in Marcus' treatment of the two issues.

In 1953 and 1955, a total of 58 Inuit were relocated from the relatively southern community of Inukjuak to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay in the Canadian high Arctic archipelago. Some 30 Inuit from Pond Inlet were also moved north at the same time. The reason given by the government for the relocation was to help the people of Inukjuak leave a land of hunger, destitution, and government welfare handouts, and to live where game and fur-bearing animals were abundant.

Marcus disputes these reasons. He states that 'any scarcity of resources in the Inukjuak area (the original homeland) was exaggerated' and thus was not a valid motive for the moves. He argues that a major reason for the moves was to protect Canadian sovereignty in the high Arctic. He also claims that game in the new areas was far less abundant than in the original homeland. Marcus portrays the high Arctic relocation of 1953–1955 as similar to the failed 1957 Ennadai Lake relocation. He closely links the two, tarring them with the same brush, depicting them both as failures with pathetic elements of human tragedy.

Nothing could be further from the truth. There is a great weight of well-documented evidence from both Inuit and non-Inuit sources supporting the success of the high Arctic move, and virtually none against it. Marcus ignores this evidence. The author also distorts evidence by taking it out of context and placing it in a completely different context. There are also many instances of using evidence in a highly questionable manner. In this review, it is only possible to cite a few of them as examples.

Case 1: on page 98, Marcus quotes two Inuit who stand to benefit from a settlement of the \$10 million Inuit claim for alleged suffering as a result of the relocation. This attempt to make a case that conditions were terrible in the new high Arctic homes continues on page 109, where Marcus attempts to demonstrate not only that the supply of

game in the new high Arctic homes was not plentiful, but that it was abundant in the Inukjuak area from which the Inuit had moved. Following are a few of the many contrary opinions on the subject from the relocated Inuit themselves, to which Marcus makes no reference. Three of the items are from letters in Canadian government files and one is from a letter in the personal files of a former MP. All were written by relocated Inuit to government officials in the years indicated. The originals were written in Inuit syllabics.

'I really do need someone to help me because this place of darkness [Resolute Bay] has white foxes. It is a good place. Also people never go hungry here, because there are lots of animals to hunt' (Levi, 1958).

'There was nothing in this area [but] lots of walrus and plenty of seals, and it has more foxes than Port Harrison [Inukjuak], and lots of square flipper seals, lots of whales....It is a good place to live' (Johnny Ekaluk, 1959).

'We are just fine and have good food here in Resolute Bay. All the children are happy. We have enough food for the dogs this year, and all the Eskimos here have enough money also' (Jacosie, 1961).

'We were relocated from our homeland to a place where there's more game [Grise Fiord]....There's seals, walrus, whales. We were in worse conditions before; no food and sometimes people went very hungry. Our ancestors [in Inukjuak] had it rougher' (Rynee, 1965).

There are many other such letters. What more, or better, evidence is required to demonstrate that the Inuit were quite satisfied with the game situation in their new high Arctic homes? Yet this evidence was ignored by Marcus.

Case 2: on page 97, Marcus cites a report by C.J. Marshall, a civil servant who visited Resolute Bay in the fall of 1953, less than two months after the relocation. Marcus writes that Marshall 'expressed his dissatisfaction with the relocation and outlined the operation's mismanagement.' He goes on at length to cite all the problems described by Marshall, thus creating the impression that the relocation was a failure.

However, after reciting this litany of problems, Marcus stops there and ignores the rest of what Marshall reported: 'Although it is too early to make any definite statement I feel personally that the experiment will be an unqualified success. The people are well fed and happy and seem to be satisfied with their new environment.'

'From what I gather, the settlement is a happy one because hunting has been very good. Almost every time the men go on a hunting trip, they bring back one or more seals and have already shot five polar bears. White fox are very plentiful, and as soon as the season opens the Eskimos will lay out their trap lines. Reports indicate that during the summer months walrus are numerous in the Resolute Bay area. With what the men are able to secure from hunting and purchase from the store, they and their families have plenty to eat. Health is very good, and there is no reason why this should not continue to be the case since the

Eskimos' contact with the white residents of the area is very limited.'

As most respectable academics would agree, such selective use of evidence is incompatible with objective research and reporting.

Case 3: on page 73, Marcus writes about Margery Hinds, the highly respected school teacher at Inukjuak in the early 1950s. He establishes her credentials and then quotes from her reports in subsequent pages to support the contention that the 1953 relocation was very badly planned and executed by RCMP Constable Ross Gibson, thus supporting the author's conclusion that the relocation was a failure.

Since Marcus considered Miss Hinds a credible witness, why did he ignore her when she described the relocations as a great success in her book *High Arctic venture*? About a visit to Resolute Bay aboard a ship in 1958, five years after the initial move, she wrote: 'Eskimos came on board from time to time, among them people I had known at Port Harrison. It was difficult to recognize many of them. All were well dressed. Younger ones had grown tall, and older ones fat, so that even before they said life was good at Resolute Bay, it was obvious they were no longer destitute as they had been five years previously.'

'The last time I visited these people in their homes was on an island in Hudson Bay to check their belongings so as to know what new equipment they needed to equip them for life in their new location in the High Arctic. They had certainly reached rock bottom, everything was worn out. That human beings could even exist with so little in such a harsh land [Inukjuak], amazed and depressed me.'

It is obvious that Miss Hinds considered the move very beneficial to the Inuit, yet Marcus ignores her testimony to that effect.

Case 4: on page 55, Marcus claims that: 'there were fears that the failure to maintain effective occupation of those remote and unpopulated areas might call Canadian claims of sovereignty into question.' Marcus then attempts to reinforce this statement by referring to Dean Vincent MacDonald's 1950 *Report on Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic*, saying that MacDonald 'advised that Canada's title be asserted and maintained "upon the ground of effective occupation alone as the chief and most satisfactory ground of reliance."' Marcus attempts to create the impression that MacDonald advised Canada that it had better get on with effective occupation in order to protect its sovereignty.

What Marcus does not mention is that MacDonald wrote the following in the same report: 'Accordingly, the conclusion appears inevitable that Canada has made so many displays of sovereignty, in so many respects, in so many places, for so long a period, and with so little challenge, as to establish its title to the whole of the Canadian Arctic region by effective occupation in conformity with the international law.' It is hard to understand why Marcus would quote MacDonald to support his contention that the relocations were carried out because Canada

was concerned about sovereignty, when MacDonald's view to the contrary is so clear.

Case 5: on pages 99–100, Marcus writes that 'Health care was lacking during the early period of the relocation.' To support this statement, he cites the case of Markoosie Patsauq, who was relocated to Resolute Bay while having an apparently active case of tuberculosis. He also mentions an 'interagency conflict between the RCMP and the Department [responsible for native affairs]' that allegedly resulted in an attempt by the RCMP to block efforts by the Department to provide professional health care to the community. From this, the reader is led to believe that the health of the relocated Inuit suffered.

Markoosie Patsauq's tuberculosis can certainly not be attributed to the relocation, since he had the condition beforehand. Subsequent to the relocation he was diagnosed as having the disease, was sent south to a hospital, was cured, returned north, eventually became the first Inuit air pilot, published a book, and lives today in Inukjuak in apparent good health. Why does Marcus try to link Patsauq's health problems to the relocation? There is no connection; rather, he attempts to coax failure from success, including ignoring documentary evidence regarding the general health of the Inuit after the relocations. This includes such statements as that from the Eastern Arctic Patrol Report of 1956 about the Grise Fiord population: 'The native camp was visited last ship time by some of the Departmental officials and by the Anglican Mission officials. All stated that the natives where [*sic*] very healthy and clean and of good spirits. The medical party advised that to date these were the healthiest natives they had encountered.'

Case 6: on page 222, Marcus quotes Henry Larsen, highly respected Canadian hero of the Arctic and senior RCMP officer at the time of the relocation: 'I shudder to think of the criticism which will be levelled at us in another fifty years' time.' In *Relocating Eden*, Marcus places Larsen's statement in the context of the high Arctic relocation. The actual context of the statement in Larsen's unpublished manuscript from which it comes is quite different. In his manuscript, Larsen's statement has nothing to do with the relocation and is clearly in the context of making liquor accessible to the Inuit:

'But, as was the case with the other, a few months saw him penniless, the entire money having been spent on liquor and gambling. If we are able to sit in harsh judgement of those who failed to help the Eskimo during the past half century, I shudder to think of the criticism which will be levelled at us in another fifty years' time. The Eskimo may have taken a long step forward towards his assimilation into the culture of the white race by his presence in the cocktail lounge, but I fear the consequences will be grave. It revolts me to think of my old friends whose earnings can by no standards be considered excessive, wasting their substance and sacrificing their dignity in this fashion. Convictions for offences involving liquor have multiplied greatly.'

It is unfortunate that Alan Marcus chose to adhere blindly to his thesis that both relocations were failures, despite weighty evidence to the contrary. It is even more unfortunate — as well as gravely irresponsible — that evidence was distorted to suit his thesis that both were failures. Had the relocations, especially that of 1953–1955, been treated objectively, Marcus' book could have been a useful contribution to the Canadian Arctic historical record. As it is, *Relocating Eden* is gravely flawed and can in no way be considered a work of legitimate historical or academic research. (Gerard I. Kenney, Ottawa, Canada.)

A GREAT TASK OF HAPPINESS: THE LIFE OF KATHLEEN SCOTT. Louisa Young. 1995. London: Macmillan. xvii + 299 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-333-57838-4. £20.00.

Any woman who could survive a Victorian upbringing and be left with the self-confidence to achieve complete fulfillment as a much-acclaimed sculptress; become the mother of two brilliant sons; travel widely; and be friend and confidante of so many artists, writers, and statesmen of her day, should surely command attention. That she also opted to marry Robert Falcon Scott, in public an Antarctic hero, in private the insecure victim of much doubt and depression, indeed her temperamental opposite, guarantees an intriguing full-blown biography. As for a biographer, it is the reader's great good fortune that Kathleen Scott's granddaughter, the daughter of Wayland Young, second Baron Kennet, herself a freelance journalist, has accepted the challenge. In her introduction, Ms Young indicates that as a young girl she read all Kathleen's diaries from their start in 1910, written as newsletters for her husband in the Antarctic, to their end in 1946, the year before her death. These, together with other Kennet papers in the Cambridge University Library, plus much private correspondence and Kathleen's own partial autobiography, *Selfportrait of an artist* (1949), constitute a comprehensive historical archive.

Readers of *Polar Record* should resist the temptation to turn directly to the chapters dealing with Kathleen's life with Scott. An understanding of their singular relationship can only be achieved by a consideration of Kathleen's childhood and formative years. To begin with, it is a fair bet that a descendant of Robert the Bruce's brother and a Greek grandmother whose father was one Jacovaki Rizo-Rangabe, Grand Postelnik of Wallachia, would inherit a genetic mix of some considerable promise. The eleventh and last child of the Reverend Lloyd Bruce, Canon of York, and his wife Janie, Kathleen, born in 1878, was orphaned at an early age and brought up in the heavily Victorian household of her great-uncle William in Edinburgh. Here she appears to have rather run wild along with her siblings, on one occasion, the reader is told, being nearly abducted by a drunk in the street, before she made her escape by biting him hard on the hand! This event, the author suggests, instilled in Kathleen a lifelong distaste for alcohol and a temporary distaste for men. Little wonder