

**CHARTING THE SEA OF DARKNESS: THE FOUR VOYAGES OF HENRY HUDSON.** Donald S. Johnson. 1993. Shrewsbury: Airlife Publishing. xiv + 242 pp, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-87742-321-0. US\$22.95.

Virtually nothing is known about Henry Hudson except that he was an accomplished navigator, spent at least part of his career as a ship's captain for the Muscovy Company, and commanded four voyages to the Arctic between 1607 and 1611. Those four Arctic expeditions are the only surviving records of his life, but fortunately they are all reported in some detail in journals written by himself and others.

Hudson's Arctic expeditions had the object of discovering a new sea route from Europe to the Orient by way of either the North Pole (1607), the Northeast Passage (1608 and 1609), or the Northwest Passage (1610–1611). Although little is known about him, the journals of his expeditions allow some interesting deductions about his personality, and the character who emerges is a fascinating subject of study. He is shown to have been, for example, a most tenacious explorer. When he tried to reach the North Pole in 1607 from the waters between Greenland and Svalbard, he tried time and again to penetrate into the ice, despite knowing from a very early stage that the task was hopelessly beyond the capability of his tiny 40-ton barque *Hopewell*. Later explorers, in stronger ships, tried once or twice then fled for safety, but one imagines Hudson striving honourably to show his sponsors that his failure was not caused by want of effort on his part. Likewise, in 1609, when the Northeast Passage proved equally unattainable, he turned around, crossed the Atlantic Ocean, and tried for the Northwest Passage instead. It was on that occasion that he discovered the Hudson River in present-day New York. Finally, on his Northwest Passage expedition of 1610–1611, his stubborn tenacity cost him his life. After discovering Hudson Bay in 1610, and spending a miserable winter in James Bay, he provoked deep unrest among many of his crew by expressing an intention to carry on with his exploration, so certain was he that in Hudson Bay he had found the key to the Northwest Passage. The dissenters mutinied, set him and eight supporters adrift in a boat, and he was never seen again. It has long been debated whether the mutiny showed him to be a weak leader, unable to sustain the morale and respect of his men, or a strong leader cursed with an unruly crew; whatever the truth, his record shows him to have been a quite exceptional explorer.

The full record of Hudson's four expeditions has been out of print for far too long. Some of the journals were published by the distinguished seventeenth-century chronicler of exploration, Samuel Purchas. In 1860, a more complete collection of journals and other records was edited for the Hakluyt Society by G.M. Asher. Neither version has ever been widely available, and, although there have been a few minor biographies of Hudson in the twentieth century, the public still has only limited access to the full story. This new edition of the journals and associated documents is therefore very welcome.

The book has been intelligently edited. In addition to an informative and interesting introduction, each expedition is preceded by a useful prologue, setting it helpfully in context. The editor has decided, boldly, to modernize the spelling of the journals throughout. This is fully justifiable. The texts supplied by Purchas and Asher, with contemporary spellings intact, are still available to the fastidious historian; for a more general readership, there is no question that the revised text with its modern spellings makes the journals more accessible and enjoyable.

There are minor flaws. Any polar enthusiast shivers at the persistent mis-spelling of Spitsbergen with a 'z.' But in general the editor and publisher have produced an attractive and readable book aimed at making the details of Hudson's achievements available to a wider readership than hitherto, and they deserve to succeed. (Clive Holland, 3 Lilac End, Haslingfield, Cambridge CB3 7LG.)

**POLAR PEOPLES: SELF-DETERMINATION AND DEVELOPMENT.** Minority Rights Group. 1994. London: Minority Rights Publications. x + 270 pp, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 1-873194-51-X.

*Polar peoples* is one of a series of books and reports prepared for and published by the Minority Rights Group of Great Britain. In this regard, it is not unlike the Copenhagen-based International Work Group on Indigenous Affairs. And, also like the IWGIA, it has developed a reputation for the anthropological quality of the materials it presents on the state of relations between minority/aboriginal peoples and the nation-states within which they live.

*Polar peoples* will by no means diminish this reputation. While, as the preface to this volume points out, there is no attempt by the authors to achieve 'ethnographic completeness,' the northern societies examined in these five chapters—Canadian and Greenland Inuit (Creery and Nuttall, respectively), Alaskan Eskimos and Indians (Korsmo), the Saami of Fenno-Scandia (Beach), and the small peoples of Russia (Vahktin)—are well covered as to their contemporary situations. Indeed, this coverage is such that the scantiness of the traditional culture histories offered for each is easily forgiven, especially as more detailed sources concerning the pre-modern state of these peoples are provided in accompanying end notes and bibliographies.

The heart of each chapter concerns the efforts toward self-determination and/or socio-political autonomy that are being made by the peoples living in each of these regions. The completeness with which the authors have attacked this necessarily particularistic process speaks volumes about the knowledge and concern each brings to his or her contribution. Each chapter is as well written and clear as the sometimes convoluted nature of these groups' independent journeys permits. An example of how difficult this can be is illustrated by Creery's chapter on Canadian Inuit, where the legal and political struggles of the British Columbia Tlingit, Quebec Cree, and Mackenzie Valley Dene, all more southerly Indian societies, have