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Author

McClellan, Catherine

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A Victorian Earl in the Arctic: The Travels and Collections of the Fifth Earl of Lonsdale 1888–89. By Shepard Krech III, with a biographical introduction by J. V. Beckett. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1989. 216 pages. \$35.00 Cloth.

This fine book holds treasures for a diverse audience ranging from those with a casual interest in northern adventures to ethnographers seeking all the historical and cultural detail they can get about specific groups of northern natives. It is a compelling example of how researchers can gain the fullest possible context for artifacts in museum collections.

The book's publication marked the opening of a 1988 exhibit of northern artifacts that Hugh Lowther, the Fifth Earl of Lonsdale (1857–1944) gave to the British Museum in 1889 as the result of a six-thousand-mile journey through northwestern Canada and Alaska. The "Yellow Earl," as he was popularly known in England because he so often favored the main color of his family arms, had been advised by the trustees who controlled his purse strings that an extended trip might mute the scandal arising from his association with the actress Violet Cameron. So in February 1888 he unwillingly set out for the American Arctic.

According to the publicity attending both his departure and his return, the purpose of the Earl's trip was to collect specimens for a Scottish natural history society that probably did not exist, to hunt musk ox, to look for traces of Sir John Franklin, or to reach the north pole. As J. V. Beckett, author of the biographical sketch that makes up part 1 of the book, and Shepard Krech III, editor of the volume, both make clear, the earl took veracity lightly. He freely tailored both his written and spoken pronouncements to show himself in the best possible light in every situation, so that the truth of events often is difficult to ferret out. It seems quite certain that he had logistical help for the journey from Sir John Rose of the Hudson's Bay Company and perhaps some backing from James J. Bennett of the *New York Herald*.

A full account of Lonsdale's life remains to be written, since the family papers dating after 1882 are not yet open to the public, but Krech was given access to the earl's diary and twenty-five letters about the northern trip written mostly to his wife and mother. Excerpts from these, with a background commentary by Krech, make up part 2 of the book. The material reveals young Lonsdale's idealized image of himself as a manly, generous, and brave sportsman, though the apparent facts were sometimes

quite otherwise. Nevertheless, by the end of his long life the earl had shed some of his early extravagances, and his public image had grown surprisingly close to his personal ideal. Under his guidance, British boxing became a respectable sport, and he also was frequently cited for contributions to other sports. His northern travels were largely forgotten.

The earl's route was from London to Winnipeg, then to Fort Chipewyan, where he spent the winter. As soon as he could in the spring, he started on a tough journey down the Mackenzie River and then up the Peel to Fort McPherson, where he arrived in July. After a turn of beluga hunting with the local Inuvialuit (Mackenzie Eskimos) in Liverpool Bay—which was the high point of the trip for Lonsdale—he crossed the divide between Fort McPherson and Fort Yukon in Alaska and descended the Yukon River. In late September he arrived at Russian Mission, where he waited impatiently for enough snow and solid ice to enable him to set out for the Kuskokwim drainage and follow the coast southeast to Nakenek and Katmai. In an almost unprecedented trip for that season, Lonsdale and those accompanying him lost most of their dogs, but on 16 March he finally crossed Shelikof Strait by boat to Kodiak, where he caught a steamer for San Francisco.

In the course of this long journey, Lonsdale encountered several different groups of Algonkian- and Athabaskan-speaking Indians, Métis, and both Inupiat and Yupik Eskimos. He also met assorted non-native and mixed-blood traders, missionaries (for whom he had little use), scientists like William Ogilvie, as well as prospectors and entrepreneurs of one sort or another. With him for the entire trip was a former Hudson's Bay Company man, Billy McEwan, who acted as valet, cook, and general handyman, and who went back to England with him. At various stages of the journey, Lonsdale also employed hunting guides, boatmen, dog team drivers, and other helpers, many of whom were natives. According to his own testimony, he became an expert dog team driver, and he sent several of his fastest dogs home to England.

The journals and letters describing this long journey are not those of a reflective man. Lonsdale carried with him prejudices characteristic of a Victorian aristocrat who had very little formal education. Like other northern adventurers of the time with whom Krech compares him—e.g., W. Pike and D. T. Hanbury—

Lonsdale did not hesitate to condemn the shortcomings of savage "others" whom he judged to be his inferiors. In discussing the reactions of Lonsdale and other men, Krech quite properly draws on George Stocking, Jr.'s *Victorian Anthropology* (1987). Both scholars stress the dangers of overgeneralization and recognize the complex and ambivalent sentiments that late Victorian travelers held towards "savages." Perhaps Krech's and Stocking's future considerations, however, could also include the somewhat more tolerant reports on natives written by American and Canadian Victorians such as E. J. Glave, Lieutenant H. T. Allen, and Dr. George Dawson, who were exploring northwestern America at about the same time.

Whatever the earl's views of northern inhabitants, he managed to meet the demands of frontier travel, which often entailed uncomfortable living arrangements and required considerable physical endurance. He was reasonably observant about what interested him most—hunting and fishing and its technology—and at the start of his trip he reported quite fully on the new country, weather, and people he was encountering. Read judiciously, his material often adds to our scant knowledge of northern natives and conditions. As the months went by, however, Lonsdale's information dwindled, as he focused more and more on how soon he could get home.

The earl took quite a few pictures, some of which are included in the book, along with others taken at about the same time. Among the most valuable are those of the Inuvialuit, for whom Lonsdale also provides welcome ethnographic data; it was with these natives that he identified most strongly. He made sure that both his wife and mother knew how successfully he had made friends with and hunted alongside these people whom the traders and missionaries regarded as the most dangerous natives of the north. They easily could have killed him.

Inuvialuit technology is particularly well represented in the earl's collection of native artifacts, which Krech describes in part 3 of the book and which consists chiefly of manufacturing tools, hunting and fishing equipment, including various lines and snares, and cold weather clothing, mostly for males. Some of these things Lonsdale bought; others were gifts from headmen who perhaps recognized something of their counterparts in the British visitor. Lonsdale not only expected his commands to be carried out by those whom he met, but he also gave them food

and other possessions. Krech points out that Lonsdale's emphasis on "sport" resulted in a northern collection differing from several others made at the same period. It contained relatively little Métis or Indian beadwork and few articles of personal adornment. Some items were quite large; Lonsdale had the monetary credit and logistic support necessary to get them back to England.

The earl kept for his personal display a fair number of items mentioned in his journal. Most have disappeared or were scattered by an estate sale in 1947. For example, one intriguing photograph, probably taken about 1890, shows Lonsdale and a party of sixteen male and female guests all dressed in Eskimo and Indian garments and posed in front of Lowther Castle with a polar bear skin (which the host bought, though he said he shot it).

Krech provides a meticulously annotated description of the artifacts given to the British Museum. All are illustrated in splendid color or black-and-white. Although they were poorly documented when received, Krech has diligently searched Lonsdale's papers for their provenance and other data. He also has combed other collections and published and unpublished sources for useful parallels to the material, thus giving added cultural context to most of the specimens. Such information about a precisely dated collection, in conjunction with details about the social context of the collector, greatly enhances the book's intrinsic ethnographic worth. This volume is a model of how we can better understand and learn from early museum collections.

Catharine McClellan
University of Wisconsin

Wild Rice and the Ojibway People. By Thomas Vennum, Jr. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1988. 357 pages. \$14.95 Paper.

This book is about much, much more than wild rice. It is an excellent source of general information about American Indian tribal peoples of the northern portion of the western Great Lakes. Although Vennum's primary focus is the Ojibway, much of the information he provides is also applicable to other tribal groups in the area. The book contains information about many cultural practices, including food-related activities separate from wild rice.