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**Pride of the Indian Wardrobe—Northern Athapascan Footwear.**

By Judy Thompson. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990. 198 pages. \$49.50 Cloth. \$25.00 Paper.

Based upon analysis of moccasins and boots from the Bata Shoe Museum, the Canadian Ethnology Service, and the Canadian Museum of Civilization collections, this work describes and illustrates footwear of Alaskan, northern Canadian, and western Canadian tribes. Maps are presented of the regions inhabited by the specific tribes. Footwear is illustrated primarily by black and white photographs. A few exquisite color photographs are also used to demonstrate the decoration and coloring of selected artifacts. Information about each boot or moccasin includes an analysis of the construction (including seaming), decoration techniques, and data about the accession of the item. Thorough descriptions, accompanied by line drawings, for assembling different styles of moccasins are presented in the appendix. In a few instances, photographs are presented of the complete costumes with which the footgear was worn, but in most instances only the footwear is described and illustrated.

Tribes or regions included are Chipewyan, Yellowknife, Dogrib, Bearlake, Slavey, Hare, Beaver, sub-Arctic Cordillera, Kutchin, Tutchone, Inland Tlingit, Tagish, Tahltan, Kaska, Sekani, Carrier, Alaska Plateau, Tanana, Koyukon, Ingalik, and Tanaina. All share Arctic and sub-Arctic climatic conditions; footwear had to be compatible with the use of snowshoes in winter, but also had to offer protection from mud, moisture, and mosquitoes in warmer seasons. Thus, the use of soft-soled moccasins or boots that protected the ankles as well as the feet predominated.

Most items were made of smoked moosehide, with decorations of beading, porcupine quills, and/or embroidery. Hide preparation is less extensively discussed than assembly techniques. (For information on the former process, one may find more detail in the earlier work of Hatt [*Arctic Anthropologist*, 1969] on Arctic skin clothing, including that of the Athapascans. This work, to which Thompson refers in detailing construction techniques, also provides insight into the complete costumes worn with the footwear.) As a method of tanning, smoking allowed the hide to be moistened and dried without stiffening—an important feature for the climates inhabited. Heavy smoking, a feature of many of the hides used in the moccasins studied by Thompson, gives a dark

brown color. Lighter smoking, sometimes used for color contrast in a moccasin or boot, produces a lighter brown color. Thus, the aesthetic qualities of the footgear were manipulated partially through the degree of smoking of the hide.

Thompson's material refers only to postcontact eras, so it is not known to what extent contact had already affected design and decoration of the artifacts. Items produced as recently as the 1980s are included. Since it is the author's intent to describe the artifacts in detail rather than to analyze their meaning, she makes no effort to trace the evolution of moccasins and boots, or to indicate the influences of acculturation on these items of apparel. Hatt's work does make an effort at analysis, hypothesizing that the moccasin arose as a consequence of the development of the snowshoe, which required a soft foot covering to accompany it. The moccasin-boot is believed to have evolved later, when the moccasin was joined to the legging. These moccasins and moccasin-boots, as opposed to earlier forms of Athapascan wear, are the items described by Thompson. Casse (*Dress*, 1984), in her analysis of Iroquois moccasins, agrees with Hatt's interpretation. The Iroquois footgear is also located in the Bata Shoe Museum and belonged to tribes that used snowshoes.

Early twentieth-century items that were collected by Teit were observed by Thompson to be less decorative and more worn than the other boots and moccasins studied. Thompson cautions that items collected by museums therefore may be very atypical of what was worn by the people who produced and used the artifacts. For several items, she raises the question of whether they were made solely to appeal to the taste of external populations to whom they were offered commercially. This suggests a need to compare items worn by the indigenous population to those produced for outside consumers. Also, a question arises about what might be used in everyday life, as compared to special or ceremonial occasions. A common problem for history of costume researchers is to sort out typical dress from atypical attire. Artifacts that are retained tend to record the more formal dress of prestigious individuals or to reflect the tastes of the collector. Thompson forthrightly acknowledges this problem.

This book begins with a quote indicating that moccasins are the most prized part of the wardrobe. They are viewed as a reflection of the affection of the woman who made them for the man who wears them. Symbolically, they also reflect her skill and

value as a woman. Casse further develops this theme in her analysis of Iroquois moccasins. For the Iroquois, moccasins are rich in symbolic meaning, being incorporated into the tribal myths and burial rites.

Thompson does not relate the footwear she describes to tribal symbolism; she clearly states that her intent is to describe the material artifacts and to leave the task of analysis of the material culture to others. Thus, she has laid the groundwork for many future researchers to develop themes such as the sexual division of labor in Athapascan tribes and to explore the role of women as reflected in the construction of moccasins.

McCracken (*Culture and Consumption*, 1988) has explicated the process of transfer of symbolic meaning from the culture to the consumer goods to the individual consumer, for modern fashion goods. A similar, broader analysis of tribal culture in relation to Athapascan footwear may be a fruitful area of further research. Comparison of the meanings of these artifacts for tribal members, collectors, and Anglo consumers might also be explored. Oral histories and long interviews might be used to supplement the material presented by Thompson to shed light on these symbolic meanings. Hamilton (*Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 1987) also has presented a theoretical framework that suggests further avenues of research on these items of apparel. Left untouched for future students are the relations of these moccasins and boots to the economic, political, kinship, ideological, aesthetic, socialization, and communications structures of the groups who produce and/or use these products. In describing these museum artifacts so well, Thompson has left a goldmine of opportunities for other scholars.

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**Sagebrush Soldier: Private William Earl Smith's View of the Sioux War of 1876.** By Sherry L. Smith. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989. 176 pages \$18.95 Cloth.

While conducting research at the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office, Sherry L. Smith discovered that her great-grandfather, Private William Earl Smith, Company E, Fourth United