

BOAS, Norman F., 2004 *Franz Boas 1858-1942. An Illustrated Biography*, Mystic, Connecticut, Seaport Autographs Press, 292 pages.

Ludger Müller-Wille

Volume 29, Number 1-2, 2005

Préserver la langue et les savoirs
Preserving language and knowledge

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/013950ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/013950ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Association Inuksiitiit Katimajit Inc.
Centre interuniversitaire d'études et de recherches autochtones (CIÉRA)

ISSN

0701-1008 (print)

1708-5268 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Müller-Wille, L. (2005). Review of [BOAS, Norman F., 2004 *Franz Boas 1858-1942. An Illustrated Biography*, Mystic, Connecticut, Seaport Autographs Press, 292 pages.] *Études/Inuit/Studies*, 29(1-2), 347-348.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/013950ar>

publication. It is also hoped that the series started with this book will continue to publish pertinent scientific contributions. With good intentions, a similar series was begun in Germany in the 1990s, but did not get beyond the first volume (Kasten 1994). We have become used to rely on literature in English as an overwhelming linguistic denominator, it is therefore refreshing to peruse and review books published in other languages to allow the sharing of insights and understandings of different cultural processes.

References

BERG, Gösta (ed.)

1973 *Circumpolar Problems. Habitat, Economy and Social Relations in the Arctic, (A Symposium for Anthropological Research in the North, September 1969)*, Oxford, Pergamon Press.

HIRNSPERGER, Markus (ed.)

2000 *Conference: Siberia and the Circumpolar North. Contributions by Anthropologists and NGOs*, Vienna, Working Group Arctic and Subarctic.

KASTEN, Erich (ed.)

1994 *Ethnologische Beiträge zur Circumpolarforschung, Band 1*, Berlin, Reinhold Schletzer Verlag.

Ludger Müller-Wille
Department of Geography
McGill University
Montréal (Québec) H3A 1Y1
Canada
ludger.muller-wille@mcgill.ca

BOAS, Norman F.

2004 *Franz Boas 1858-1942. An Illustrated Biography*, Mystic, Connecticut, Seaport Autographs Press, 292 pages.

This book is the first complete biography of Franz Boas written by his grandson, Norman F. Boas. The author states clearly that he intended to write an illustrated biography with a personal viewpoint expressed by Franz Boas' descendents. He does not aim at a critical scientific analysis of Boas' achievements. Still, Norman Boas presents succinctly Boas' scientific accomplishments and academic career and compliments his writings with much engaged personal insight into Franz Boas' personality as experienced by the extended Boas-Krackowizer family. The book is illustrated with a large number of private photos of Franz Boas, his family, and his research sites in the Canadian Arctic and British Columbia; some of these photos have never been published before.

Particular attention is given to Boas' experiences while staying among the Inuit of southern Baffin Island in the 1880s and how he conveyed his views of Inuit and the Arctic to his children and grandchildren. This section is of particular interest to arctic social scientists. The chapters are organized chronologically focussing in Boas' personal and academic career, immigration to the USA, personal ordeals, political activism, and legacy. These chapters are based on original archival materials housed with the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia, PA, but also draw from documents in private collection of Boas family members.

The Epilogue includes the description of the encounter, in the 1980s, between members of the Boas family and the Kwakwa'wakw in Alert Bay, British Columbia, with whom Boas worked between the 1880s and 1930s and in particular with one of their members, George Hunt. This moving story shows the closing of a circle that begun with Boas and ended in mediation and conciliation, when materials entailing knowledge were returned by the Boas family—an extraordinary event.

This timely book adds to the wealth of literature on Franz Boas who has kept many cultural anthropologists occupied to ponder about his work and approach to study the difference in human expressions. Norman F. Boas is to be congratulated for his persistence and energy to complete and publish this biography.

Ludger Müller-Wille
Department of Geography
McGill University
Montréal (Québec) H3A 1Y1
Canada
ludger.muller-wille@mcgill.ca

DALEY, Patrick J. and Beverly A. JAMES

2004 *Cultural Politics and the Mass Media: Alaska Native Voices*, Urbana and Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 235 pages.

This is a long overdue and much welcome study of indigenous media in Alaska, which places the media firmly in historical, political, and cultural context. In part, it is a political history of efforts by Alaska Native peoples to challenge state and federal policies and activities, making it an excellent teaching resource for programmes in political and social sciences as well as media and cultural studies. It outlines the political machinations and manoeuvrings that have constantly threatened—and continue to threaten—the cultures, lives, and livelihood of Alaska Natives and the overall integrity and survival of Alaskan flora, fauna, lands and waters. Also included are a helpful list of abbreviations and a few well-chosen maps and illustrations.

The very interesting and thoughtful introductory discussion of Alaska Natives' use of mass media to challenge Euro-American cultural hegemony is followed by a chapter outlining indigenous experiences of missionary interventions and the role of mass