

***The Industrial Transformation of Subarctic Canada.* By Liza Piper. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009. 424 p., ill., tab., maps., bibl., index. ISBN 978-0-7748-1532-1 85\$ hc. ISBN 978-0-7748-1533-8 32.95\$ pb.)**

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To a great extent, they succeed. They also offer avenues for further research, one being the change in public attitudes, policies, ecological considerations and priorities emerging with the Peter Lougheed provincial government's election in the mid 1960s. However, there are weaknesses. The length of the book is daunting and the level of detail in many areas would have benefited from considerable pruning, although this might have reflected the very difficulty of handling watery history. Where to limit historical discussion of an ecologically cycling element like water is, of course, hard to say. The authors seem to tarry, for instance, in the river's lower reaches where it joins the South Saskatchewan and broils with the water politics that flow between Alberta and Saskatchewan. They provide minutiae of national park history that range from the triumph of the automobile in the park to the Banff Springs Hotel's guests. They quite exhaustively chronicle changing federal and provincial regulation and regulatory bodies. All the same, this is indeed a small criticism. The research backing this work is impressive and the length and breadth of the narrative, in the end, is certainly worthy of the river itself.

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***The Industrial Transformation of Subarctic Canada.* By Liza Piper.** (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009. 424 p., ill., tab., maps., bibl., index. ISBN 978-0-7748-1532-1 85\$ hc. ISBN 978-0-7748-1533-8 32.95\$ pb.).

Liza Piper justifies her exploration of industrial development in subarctic Canada with a classic defense of the value of history; the study of history is worthwhile because lessons learned can guide us in the present and future. Canadians may have forgotten the lessons that history can teach about subarctic industrialization, at least partly because the first large wave of development there took place early in the twentieth century and largely died out by the 1960s. In recent decades, controversy, mostly motivated by environmental concerns, has slowed and sometimes blocked northern industrial projects. The author believes that looking back at early subarctic industrialization will help inform current debates.

The title of Piper's book suggests that readers can expect a broad examination of the industrialization of the vast subarctic region that covers much of Canada. In reality, the author studies a relatively small portion of Canada's subarctic. Omitted from this study of industrialization are the subarctic portions of Atlantic and Central Canada, British Columbia, and Yukon Territory as well as much of the subarctic that falls within the

three Prairie Provinces and the Northwest Territories. Piper focuses on what she refers to as the region's four "large lakes": Lake Winnipeg, Lake Athabasca, Great Slave Lake, and Great Bear Lake. Without doubt, industrial development of importance took place on and near those four lakes by the 1960s. Yet, the author creates the impression that little industrial activity took place in the rest of the vast northwestern subarctic.

Piper does include occasional glimpses into the industrial processes in subarctic areas that fell substantial distances from the four large lakes. Included, for example, is a description of the construction of the Hudson Bay Railway. But the reader will not gain a clear picture of development in the larger region by only reading this book. Piper's discussion of commercial fishing on Lake Athabasca, a lake that falls largely within Saskatchewan, illustrates this point. By focusing on the Lake Athabasca fishery the author provides only a small portion of the picture, and a misleading picture at that, of the mid-century commercial fishery in Saskatchewan. The private Lake Athabasca fishery was an anomaly in that province where the CCF government controlled most of the fishery. Also missing from this chronicle of subarctic industrialization is a description of the role played by the forest industry. While Piper acknowledges that forestry was one of the major subarctic industries, she gives little attention to that industry, possibly because no major wood industries operated near the four large lakes. Although sizable gaps remain in this portrait of the subarctic region, the strategy of focusing on four local areas also has its merits. Doing so allows for the inclusion of details that would not fit in a more general work.

This book is broken into three sections. In the first of these, the author provides an overview of the history and geology of the areas under study; she quickly moves through the millennia and well into the early twentieth century. Because of the remoteness of much of the subarctic, early industrialization depended on the development of transportation infrastructure, details of which Piper includes. The author also describes how the subarctic followed a different and more active development path during the 1930s than much of the rest of Canada, which suffered under the effects of the Great Depression. On reaching the end of the book's first section, the reader should possess a basic understanding of the background history and of the beginnings of the unprecedented industrialization of the twentieth century.

After laying the foundation, in the second and third sections Piper tells the story of the accelerated industrial development in the areas of the four large lakes. This includes a detailed description of the commercial fisheries on Lake Winnipeg, Lake Athabasca, and Great Slave Lake. Even though the author stops short of strongly condemning the fishing companies, scientists, and government regulators, the facts speak for themselves. The commercial

fishers overfished and inflicted long term damage on the fish populations and lake environments. These sections of the book also provide valuable descriptions of gold and uranium mining at Lake Athabasca and the two large lakes in the Northwest Territories. Piper details how, at least in comparison with today's situation, a relative free for all existed in the mining industry prior to 1960. A friendly and encouraging regulatory environment allowed mining companies to operate with few restrictions. Although operations altered and damaged local environments, both above and below the earth's surface, corporations moved on once they depleted ore bodies. The reader will also gain an understanding of how transportation networks continued to expand, facilitating extraction of resources.

Piper's work does not strongly or consistently condemn subarctic industrial development. The author acknowledges that unnecessary and even severe environmental damage accompanied industrialization. She also mentions how industrial activity created "disorder" in a formerly ordered environment. Yet, at times, the reader may wonder if Piper does not admire the relatively unregulated nature of the early mining and commercial fishing operations. After all, the harshest effects of industrialization damaged relatively small areas. And even in those locations, once the newcomers departed, scars faded. Piper refers to industrial development in organic terms, as if the mining and fishery companies found, consumed, and eliminated northern resources in much the same way that animals do. The author's approach allows—or possibly encourages—readers to form their own judgment about the various industrial developments.

By scouring numerous archives, collections of papers, and the general literature, Piper has assembled a substantial body of information about past industrial development in four local areas of the subarctic. The author performs a useful and valuable service to students of history and those charged with planning and implementing future northern industrial projects. Readers may learn lessons about the resiliency of the planet and its systems, and they may make wiser decisions than did those who went before.

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## Technology / Technologie

*Japan's Motorcycle Wars: An Industry History.* By Jeffrey W. Alexander. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008. xii + 276 p., ill., tab., notes, bibl., index. ISBN 978-0-7748-1453-9 85 \$ hc. ISBN 978-0-7748-1454-6 29.95\$ pb.).

Jeffrey Alexander has done something anyone interested in Japan, industrial development, business history, and yes, motorcycles, should