

The Northern Review

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Call for Papers: Number 30 (Winter 2008/2009)

The *Northern Review* invites manuscript submissions from the arts, social sciences, and humanities that concern human experience in, and thought about, the Circumpolar North. Papers received by midnight on August 15 will be considered for publication in Number 30 (Winter 2008/2009). Refer to the website for contributor guidelines or email review@yukoncollege.yk.ca.

Notice of forthcoming call for submissions: Special Literary Issue, Number 31 (Summer 2009)

Number 31 will be the *Northern Review's* second Special Literary Issue—the first was Number 10 (Summer 1993). We will publish short works of fiction, poetry, and creative non-fiction about the North and/or set in the North. A formal call for submissions will appear in the next issue, or email review@yukoncollege.yk.ca for guidelines.

Rapid Landscape Changes, Their Causes, and How They Affect Human History and Culture

Antony R. Berger

Abstract: Despite common knowledge about harmful natural processes and disasters, there appears today to be a widespread belief that somehow if only people would be less destructive in their behaviour with respect to the environment, natural systems and landscapes would remain unchanged—static and immutable. Yet there are many landscape changes that can be readily seen within a normal human lifetime, and the record of past environments provides clear evidence that rapid changes occurred in many places. Variations in climate are one cause, but there are other “drivers,” too, such as volcanic eruptions, coastal erosion, floods, fires, and earthquakes. Although abrupt changes prior to the mid-Holocene are primarily of non-human origin, the current warming in the Arctic appears to be largely human-induced. However, sorting out human from non-human drivers is not an easy task. Environments and ecosystems around the planet are clearly under stress from human activities, but even when left alone natural landscapes by and large are not static and fixed. The story of landscape change in the North is being refined by paleoenvironmental science through fossil remains, lake sediments, ice cores, tree rings, ground temperature profiles, and by archaeology and ethnography. It is also told through the cultural narratives of Indigenous peoples, which speak of ancestors and how they lived. When integrated with the recent findings of science, even shadowy recollections of landscape changes in the distant past may yield information as to how people reacted. Such insights could serve to influence the way people today think about history and about nature, and might even provide perspectives to help cope with environmental change in the coming years.

Introduction

Rapid landscape change in the Circumpolar North region exemplifies many contemporary key issues: extraordinary departures from the average, surprise and unpredictability, importance of the local scale, and the value of insights of local people. Many different research projects are helping to shape

The Life and Death of Kwäday Dän Ts'ínchí, an Ancient Frozen Body from British Columbia: Clues from Remains of Plants and Animals

James H. Dickson and Petra J. Mudie

Abstract: The body of a prehistoric Aboriginal man (Kwäday Dän Ts'ínchí, Long Ago Person Found) was recovered in 1999 from a melting glacier in northwestern British Columbia. The frozen man was lying at 1,600 metres above sea level and about fifty kilometres from the Chilkat River estuary in southeastern Alaska. Archaeobotanical studies, ethnobotanical research, and forensic palynology have been carried out to address the following questions: What had he been doing there? Where had he come from? What was his lifestyle and diet? Was his death related to sudden climate change at the start of the Little Ice Age? We can now answer some of these questions partially or completely, and point towards the start of his last journey in a salt marsh on the coast of southeastern Alaska.

Introduction

In 1999, the body of a prehistoric Aboriginal man (Kwäday Dän Ts'ínchí, meaning Long Ago Person Found) was recovered from a melting ridge on the Samuel Glacier in northwestern British Columbia by three young men hunting for Dall's sheep (Beattie et al., 2000; Pringle, 2002). The frozen man was lying at 1,600 metres above sea level, about fifty kilometres inland from the upper estuary of the Chilkat River in southeastern Alaska, and eighty kilometers south of Klukshu, a traditional fishing camp in southeastern Yukon (figure 1). Archaeobotanical studies, ethnobotanical research, and forensic palynology have been carried out to address the following questions: What had he been doing there on the remote glacier? Had he traveled from the Alaskan coast or from southeast Yukon? Was his home on the coast or inland? Who were his kin—the Southern Tutchone people or the Tlingits?

Climate, Society, and Natural Hazards: Changing Hazard Exposure in Two Nunavut Communities

James D. Ford

Abstract: This article analyzes changing exposure of Inuit to environmental hazards in two Nunavut communities. One hundred and twelve interviews were conducted in Arctic Bay and Igloolik to identify the environmental hazards to which people are susceptible, to provide insights into how hazard exposure has changed over time, and to identify those factors that influence exposure to environmental risks. Analysis of secondary sources was used to add historical depth. The research indicates a complex pattern of changing hazard exposure over the past fifty years. New hazards have emerged, old ones have disappeared, and there have been changes to the magnitude and frequency of hazards that have always affected Inuit. Long-term trends affecting hazard exposure in the two communities include changes in the timing, location, and equipment used in harvesting, which must be situated in the context of changing community socio-cultural dynamics in the second half of the twentieth century. Changing exposure in recent years reflects the interaction of climate change with social, economic, political, and technological changes that have affected Inuit environment interactions.

1. Introduction

In many Inuit communities in Canada hunting continues to be a valued activity with social, cultural, and economic significance (Furgal and Seguin, 2006). Risks associated with hunting are well-known and are an accepted part of Arctic life. As highlighted in table 1, frostbite, avalanches, blizzards, ice breakup, thin ice, and bad weather claim lives and exact significant financial cost in terms of lost equipment and search and rescue operations. According to the Nunavut Office of Chief Coroner, for example, and highlighted in table 2, from January 2000 to October 2006 there were forty

The Domino Effect: Culture Change and Environmental Change in Newfoundland, 1500–1100 cal BP

Trevor Bell and M.A.P. Renouf

Abstract: This article examines the relationship between culture change and climate change in Newfoundland at 1500–1100 cal BP, a period during which two cultural groups lived there, Dorset Palaeoeskimos and Recent Indians. Dorset Palaeoeskimos were specialist seal hunters and Recent Indians practised a more generalized economy based on a mix of marine and terrestrial resources. We suggest that climate warming recorded in marine and lake proxy data from western Newfoundland, and dated at 1500–1100 cal BP, undermined the subsistence basis of a key Dorset site, Phillip’s Garden, at Port au Choix. We speculate that warming sea surface temperatures might have occurred throughout coastal Newfoundland and if so might have undermined Dorset seal hunters in all regions. We also link Dorset population collapse to the abandonment of Phillip’s Garden, which we hypothesize was a key site that facilitated social relations with Labrador. We argue that site abandonment disrupted important social networks, and as a result Dorset populations throughout Newfoundland became increasingly vulnerable in the face of increasing environmental stress on harp seal resources. At the same time, climate warming and the Dorset collapse positively impacted contemporaneous Recent Indian populations, enabling an increase in population and their expansion into areas vacated by Dorset.

Introduction

Our article examines the relationship between culture change and climate change in Newfoundland at 1500–1100 cal BP¹. Our analysis is based on high-resolution palaeoenvironmental and archaeological data from Port au Choix in northwestern Newfoundland (fig. 1). From this basis we extrapolate to Newfoundland as a whole, for which no high resolution palaeoenvironmental data are currently available. While this article is similar to earlier approaches connecting culture change to climate change in the

Rapid Landscape Change, Vulnerability, and Social Responsibility

Thomas Heyd

Abstract: In this article I explore the relation between vulnerability to rapid landscape change, on the one hand, and conceptions of land and responsibility for landscape, on the other. I begin by briefly discussing the notion of vulnerability to natural phenomena, and possible ways of addressing it. Next, I introduce some of the ways in which natural phenomena and processes have been perceived, and take note of the sense of responsibility toward landscape often expressed among peoples who are deeply rooted in the land. I continue with a discussion of the basis of the respect that underlies this sense of responsibility and with an account of what respect amounts to in this context. After this I point out how respect for natural phenomena may lead to a lowering of vulnerability. I conclude that it is imperative to develop those ways of conceiving of natural phenomena that will lead to a deep sense of respect and responsibility for the natural world that surrounds us.

Vulnerability and Adaptive Responses

While the thought of rapid landscape change may bring to mind images such as eroded mountain slopes or deep arroyos cutting through alluvial valleys, such change can be brought about in a variety of ways. As Karen Baltgailis of the Yukon Conservation Society pointed out to me, Yukoners, for instance, have been struggling with rapid landscape change clearly caused by *human* activity, such as unsustainable mining and forestry practices. Generally, though, rapid landscape change is brought about by multiple, combined factors, some anthropogenic and others not. Rapid landscape changes (especially changes perceived to be of a catastrophic sort), whatever their causes, should lead responsible decision makers to take precautionary action (or remedial action, if the event has already taken place).¹

In the city of Valencia, Spain, where I spent my adolescent years, the river Turia flooded about a decade before my arrival. Even fifteen years after the event, people would point out the line on some of the buildings,

Perpetual Perishing, Perpetual Renewal

Holmes Rolston, III

Abstract: Darwinian nature is in dialectic: conflict and resolution. Human life evolved out of such dialectical nature. If that began in Africa, it continues when humans migrate far North. Religious encounters with such nature, whatever their differences with Darwinism, also find that life is perpetually renewed in the midst of its perpetual perishing. Life is ever “conserved,” as biologists might say; life is ever “redeemed,” as theologians might say. In this generating of new life, nature is cruciform, beyond the dialectical. Such processes, set in their ecological settings, perennially transform disvalues in nature into prolific values, generating the global richness of evolutionary natural history and its exuberance of life. Such sombre beauty in life is nowhere better exemplified than in boreal and Arctic nature.

1. Conflict and Resolution: Dialectical Nature

We often encounter nature with ambivalence, a seeming mix of some goods and some bads. If humans first found this out in Africa and the Middle East, the ambivalence continues in the Yukon and points North. Living more deeply into such encounter, we realize the creative character of conflict and resolution. Superficially, so far as nature is antagonistic and discomforting, it has disvalue. With deeper insight, we do not always count environmental conductance as good and environmental resistance as bad, but the currents of life flow in their interplay, or, to be more philosophical about it, in their dialectic. An environment that was entirely hostile would slay life; life could never have appeared within it. An environment that was entirely irenic would stagnate life; without struggle, neither biodiversity nor biocomplexity would have evolved.

Most of the beauty of life comes out of such conflict and resolution. The cougar’s fang sharpens the deer’s sight, the deer’s fleet-footedness shapes a more supple lioness. The brains of lions in zoos rapidly degenerate. Chickadees living in the wild produce double the number of neurons of

The Need to Conduct Studies of Swedish Saami Reindeer-Herder Subsistence Behaviours: A Case of Indigenous Resource-Use Rights

Robert P. Wheelersburg

Abstract: Although much is known about Swedish Saami reindeer herding, one area that has received little attention is traditional subsistence activities that support modern herding families and provide a means of cultural survival. This article examines the current political situation in Sweden related to efforts to comply with the European Community's International Labour Organization Convention No. 169 Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries. The need for studying traditional subsistence practised by the Swedish Saami herders is summarized, and the importance of subsistence research among Inuit groups in Alaska provides a comparative framework for the types of information that can be obtained from such research. Subsistence studies are examined in light of current research priorities of the Circumpolar North scientific community.

Introduction

According to Western scholarship and Indigenous knowledge, Aboriginal Arctic cultures may survive only if their peoples continue to utilize natural resources through traditional subsistence activities. Aspects of Arctic cultures associated with traditional subsistence activities include values and attitudes, material culture, and language (Jernsletten 1997). Yet, it is often difficult to continue traditional subsistence activities as northern regions come under increasing development pressures and Indigenous peoples lose access to natural resources. For Swedish Saami herding families, natural resources important for subsistence include reindeer pasturage; wild foods acquired through hunting, fishing, and collecting; and raw materials for handicrafts and clothing. Rights to those natural resources are considered essential to

Questioning Mine Mill in Yellowknife: The Need for a Northern Labour History

Chris Powell

Abstract: This article chronicles the contributions of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers to the social, political and economic development of Canada's Northwest Territories, and particularly its capital Yellowknife. A remote region with a largely Aboriginal population, the emergence of a gold mining industry around Yellowknife Bay starting in the mid-1930s led to the arrival of Mine Mill activists within less than a decade. The union's strong ties to the Communist Party at the time left a limited radical imprint upon northern working-class development. The union contributed to community and regional development, while at the same time fighting a losing battle against a right-wing Canadian labour movement. The demise of Mine Mill in the North, and throughout Canada, came at a time when the labour movement both regionally and nationally began its transition from being primarily industrially-based to one grounded in the public service.

Prior to 1992 most people were unaware of the role of organized labour in Canada's Northwest Territories. The bombing of Yellowknife's Giant Mine in that year and the subsequent conviction of a local union activist on nine charges of first degree murder focused national and international attention on labour strife in the North for a short time. More importantly, it exposed the absence of any scholarly study of organized labour in what was at the time Canada's largest member of Confederation. Other than the little that journalists touched upon the subject to put the Giant Mine disaster in some sort of context, the pages of northern labour history largely remained blank ones.¹ The publication in 1994 of William Morrison and Kenneth Coates' *Working the North* began to fill those empty pages, but their work addresses issues of an unorganized workforce throughout the northern areas of the western provinces, Alaska, and the Yukon as well as the Northwest Territories.² To

Testing, Testing, Testing: Rural and Urban Responses to Alaska's High-Stakes Assessment Regime

Jerry McBeath and Maria Elena Reyes

Abstract: Under both federal legislation called *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) and state legislation, Alaska students now take tests to determine whether they have made “adequate yearly progress” (AYP) and are qualified to graduate from high school. This mandated high-stakes testing regime—unique in the Circumpolar North—faces implementation challenges in rural Alaska because of the historically pronounced achievement gap between Native and non-Native students. The researchers of this article compare the environment of schooling in urban and rural Alaska. Then, they report on the perceptions of rural and urban educators (teachers and principals) concerning the tests and the changes they have brought about in curriculum, staffing, school administration, and extracurricular activities following the first administration of these tests. The researchers conclude with a discussion of the costs and benefits of high-stakes testing, with emphasis on obstacles to successful implementation in rural Alaska schools, and provide an update on the progress that state educators have made following the initial implementation of the historic legislation.

Introduction

In 1997, the Alaska State Legislature adopted a new statewide educational assessment system calling for Benchmark and High School Graduation Qualifying Examinations. The Benchmark examinations were to be administered annually to third, sixth, and eighth grade students. The High School Graduation Qualifying Examination (HSGQE) was to be given twice annually, starting with sophomores (grade 10) in the year 2000. This test was designed as a high-stakes examination:¹ students failing to pass the reading, writing, and mathematics sections by the effective date of February 2002 (later amended to 2004) would not receive high school diplomas.

Counsellor Training via Distance Education: Opportunities for Rural Alaskan Communities

Christine R. Cook, Anthony T. Strange, Susan L. Renes

Abstract: This article focuses on the benefits of utilizing a distance education format for school and community counsellor education and training in rural Alaska. The authors highlight the need for distance education options in rural communities and discuss providing quality education, emphasizing cross-cultural competencies, and establishing and supporting student learning outcomes surrounding distance education. Specifically, the need for maintaining a personal dimension in counsellor education is examined, as this element is necessary for developing effective relationships. A current counsellor education program based at the University of Alaska Fairbanks is used to demonstrate how such a format can be used to meet the needs of students in rural communities.

Introduction

This article highlights the unique needs of rural communities and the delivery of counselling services; it specifically focuses on issues related to counsellor training utilizing distance methods. A sample program at the University of Alaska Fairbanks is presented to demonstrate how all the components of distance education can be integrated into a comprehensive counsellor education Master's Degree. It then discusses the benefits, along with the concerns, related to distance education delivery. The article underscores the importance of delivering graduate education to students in remote locations and the possible implications the program can have on the rural areas of Alaska.

Over one-fifth of the United States population resides in rural areas—those communities with fewer than 2,500 residents (Rural School and Community Trust [RSCT], 2003). These communities have many of the same

Village Public Safety Officer Turnover and Reported Violent Crime in Alaska Native Villages

Darryl S. Wood

Abstract: Since its inception in the early 1980s as a response to high rates of accidental and intentional injury deaths in isolated Alaska Native villages, the Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO) program has faced tremendously high levels of employment turnover. This attrition often results in villages being without a local police presence for weeks at a time. The impact of this lack of presence upon public safety in these villages was examined using records of offences reported to the Alaska State Troopers over the period 1998–2002. Differences in reported violent crime rates during the periods when a VPSO was present in a community were compared with the reported violent crime rates during periods of officer absence. There were no statistically significant differences in the reported rates of homicide or sexual assault when villages were or were not served by a VPSO. Reported felony assault rates were at least as high, if not higher, in villages without VPSO service as opposed to villages with VPSO service. Rates of reported misdemeanour assaults, contrary to expectations, were actually lower when villages were without VPSO service compared to when they had VPSO service. These results indicate that violent crime rates are partly a function of having someone to whom a crime might be reported rather than a result of any underlying criminal behaviour.

Introduction

The demands of geographic isolation have made the provision of local police and public safety services to many of the 225 Alaska Native villages distributed across the state very difficult. With populations generally under 500 persons, these villages lack the tax bases and the economies of scale required to support fully certified police departments. This problem is further exacerbated for the 165 villages located off of Alaska's road system. The State of Alaska's response to the difficulties of providing a local police presence in