

I Lived With The Eskimos

**by
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Appendix I - Geography With A Smile

Let us take a look at the map of North America. You can almost trace the complete history of the exploration of the northern part of the continent by the names of the adventurers which have been given to the islands, the bays, the rivers and straits below and above the Arctic Circle.

When Christopher Columbus brought home to Europe, after his voyage of 1492, his story of a great new land, it did not take long before the sailors of seafaring European countries trimmed their small craft to try their luck in adventure. The air pilot who flies the Atlantic ocean in these modern days is called a hero, and of course he is one, but many times the courage must have been needed to start out in a small sailboat, with no modern boxed compass, no charts of the seas, no radio equipment, no wireless, and a very inadequate type of provisions, since there was no refrigeration.

Cabot, six years after Columbus, seems to have made his way along the North American coast; and before Henry Hudson was born there sailed westward from England Sir Martin Frobisher, who, in other travels and exploration, had been associated with Sir Francis Drake. Frobisher Bay is named for this early hero who died in 1594, and yet his name is not remembered as is that of Drake, who, if he traveled in the Northland, left no record there. Sir Francis Drake's name is surrounded with other legend, for to this day it is believed in many parts of England that there comes a peculiar sound from the sea, "the roll of Drake's drum," said to be heard only when England is menaced by danger. Prior to 1914 and the World War the drum was heard to sound, and its sounding satisfies the old seamen of the country, for they say: "Now Drake is with us, and all is well; the ships cannot fail when Drake leads."

Frobisher's exciting stories of a land where there were snow and ice, where in the ocean there were white whales and sea animals that bore fur, took the attention of Sir Humphrey Gilbert, whose half-brother, Sir Walter Raleigh, was already finding strange products in a more southerly country which was to be called the Virginias. Sir Walter brought home tobacco and potatoes, but Sir Humphrey determined he would find something equally wonderful. He sailed northward with a flotilla of ships and discovered Newfoundland, claiming it in 1583 as the first British colony. As he turned with sails set for home there

remained above the waves only two of the flotilla of ships, the *Golden Hand* and the *Squirrel*. It was with the *Squirrel* that Sir Humprey was to come to the end of his adventurous life, when that small vessel was wrecked and sank to the ocean bed.

It was April of the year 1607 when a mysterious young man appeared in London, and demanded from those he thought he could interest, the aid of money to equip a ship in which he proposed to find a northwest passage to Cathay in the Orient. Before that April day nobody had heard of Henry Hudson, and no record of his life before that date has ever been found. He must have been a sailor, for he took command of the small boat which was outfitted, but evidently this expedition did not result in much of importance, for the next year we hear of Hudson as he is about to leave Europe aboard the good ship *Half Moon*, an eighty-ton ship which was manned by a crew of twenty sailors. This ship reached Nova Zembla with news reported of fighting and quarrels among the sailors, but Hudson records in his log that he was not to be put off from his purpose; he swung his sails to the wind and steered his quarreling crew across the Atlantic. Altering his course from a trial trip of two years before, and moving south instead of northwest. Henry Hudson came upon a broad and lovely harbor with islands scattered here and there. He penetrated along this unknown way, and found the wide water narrowed to a river. Hudson was delighted, his men were happy again; they thought they had found that elusive northwest waterway which would bring them to Asia. They sailed a hundred and fifty miles up this river, then came to a point where even the small ships of that day were too large to sail. That river was to become known as the Hudson River, and the point at which the ships were stopped is now Albany, Capital of New York State.

Henry Hudson returned to his home in London, but was not content to stay very long. He set off once more in the year 1610, taking with him his young son, a lad not yet in his teens. The ship was the *Discoverie*, which came first to Greenland, then was steered due west, and keeping on its course a thousand miles or more, Hudson came on the strait which was to bear his name. Hudson Strait, known now to be four hundred and fifty miles long and leading into Hudson Bay, was the important find. Hudson on this voyage must have passed Cape Chidley and the small island of Port Burwell where I was to have my headquarters during the three most interesting years of my Mounted Police service; he must have seen Savage Island where I was shipwrecked, and he must have seen the strange Akpatok.

Henry Hudson had a tragic end. Once more his crew mutinied, this time while they were in Hudson Bay, the west coast of which Hudson does not seem to have found. Hudson and his son were cast adrift in a small boat in the angry inland sea, the first mate remaining in charge of the ship with the mutinous

sailors. These survivors became short of water and are thought to have gone ashore at Erik Cove, where the first mate is supposed to have been killed. What was left of the crew took the *Discoverie* back to England, where they were promptly punished for their rebellion. Henry Hudson and his son were never heard of afterward.

Two familiar names in history and in geography are those of Weymouth and Davis, both of whom explored the western Atlantic before Hudson; and another, immediately after Hudson came into the fascinating game of finding new lands, was Captain Thomas Button. Bylot and Baffin sailed west in their small boats about the year 1612, and Baffin Bay was discovered in the year 1616, encouraged by sight of many whales and seals, and knowing such sea animals meant much trading, these men pushed on to find Baffin Land, which turned out to be an island. Lancaster Sound lies to its north; Baffin Bay, which is sometimes known as Baffin Sea, and Davis Strait are on the east of this little known country; Hudson Strait is at the south; and the Gulf of Boothia and Foxe Channel are on the west. Foxe, for whom the channel is named, did not sail westward until the year 1631. It was in this region, south of the most southerly tip of Baffin Land, that I was to have my experience of the North, and here and westward may become the new home of the young pioneers of tomorrow.

The expeditions of Captain Luke Foxe and Captain Thomas James seemed to convince the sailors of the old country that there was no way to get to the Pacific Ocean by a northwest passage, yet it did not stop the determined adventurers from coming to see the strange new world. There was Captain Christopher Middleton, who sailed across in 1742, just about the time the "Gentlemen Adventurers of England," under Prince Rupert, were setting out to form what became and is known throughout the world as the Hudson's Bay Company. Less than thirty years after Captain Middleton's arrival there came Samuel Hearne, who left notes on Fort Prince of Wales, a place now known as Churchill, which is destined to become the great north mid-continent port for Europe.

The romance of the country's history stirred my blood, as it does that of any red-blooded young man about to choose his life's work. Qualification in modern sciences seems to be a pathway which will lead to big things in the far North, although as yet there are few openings, and these demand energy, endurance and more than ordinary ambition. They demand the do-or-die spirit, a strong body, strong mind and strong soul as part of each northern explorer's equipment. Few men are needed in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and each year the qualifications become more difficult, but success in the North waits for the young man who has something worthwhile to offer.

Alexander Mackenzie followed Hearne, and Sir John Franklin led expeditions which traveled over the land, before he set out on the sea exploration on which he and his men were lost. Franklin had with him in the earlier expeditions Sir John Richardson, Sir George Back and Lieutenant R Hood. Captain John Ross headed another expedition, and it was his nephew, Captain James Clark, who located the Magnetic Pole.

Over one hundred years ago, in the year Victoria became queen of England, Thomas Simpson with Peter Warren Dease explored for the Hudson's Bay Company, and through the years since there has been a long procession of men seeking the secrets of the North. There come to mind the names of Dr. John Rae; Captain Richard Collinson, sailing in the *Enterprise*; and Captain Robert M'Clure in the *Investigator*; Lieutenant Hodson and Captain M'Clintock. There have been and are many Sisters, and many missionaries of the Roman Catholic and other Churches, bringing with them hospital equipment and schools. And yet the 916,992 square miles of Mackenzie District, Keewatin, Victoria Island, Banks, Prince of Wales and King William Islands, Boothia and Melville peninsulas, are still comparatively unknown and unpopulated except for the scattered tribes of Indians in the timber country. Of these there are the Chippewyan, Dogrib, Yellowknife, Beaver, Slave, Hare, Sekani, Nahani and Kutchin, none of which come east of Hudson Bay. I have had little to do with the Indians, who are not related to the Eskimos and are unlike them in every way. The Indians do not call forth the admiration of the white man for qualities of worth as have those friends of mine, the Inuit, to which belonged Lukas, Nashula, Tommy, Troutguts and to the others of the native population of Port Burwell district, which numbered about one hundred and forty men, women and children.

Up until 1931 there were not a thousand white men in the long stretches of the new country, but since the coming of the airplane, which carries mail, freight and passengers, the number of white people has steadily increased. Until the coming of the airplane it seemed the North would forever be a land of mystery, and always go unconquered. Now tons of equipment can be flown in to settlements where it would have taken weeks and months to haul less than half as much material overland by dog sled and by portage.

Draw a line south and a little east from Baffin Land and Port Burwell, and you come to parts of the North American continent with which everyone is familiar. Here is Newfoundland, which, with Labrador comes under a separate government from that of Canada. The residents of Newfoundland are sometimes called by the nickname, Gobby Islanders. On the mainland close by lies Nova Scotia, with its people known as Blue Noses. New Brunswick residents have the inelegant name of Herring Chokers; those of Prince Edward Island are called Spud Islanders. Then come *Les Habitants*, the French Canadians of Quebec;

Ontario dwellers answer to the general name of Scotsmen, with the people of Manitoba and Saskatchewan sharing the name, Westerners. In Alberta, the inhabitants are called Big Horns, after their mountain sheep; British Columbians answer to the silvery name of Salmon Bellies; while the Yukon knows its old timers as Sourdoughs.

It is no longer true that there are no new lands to be brought under domination of modern civilization, and to be put to the good use of mankind. There are worlds waiting to be conquered, worlds of scientific research in the development of new minerals; the stress of weather must be combatted, a thousand needs are beckoning to the new pioneer, whose call comes not from the West, but from the North.