

of their youth, taken a few writing lessons along the way, and found a publisher who would agree to spring for a skilled copyeditor—then this could have been a real winner.

STEVE ROPER

Canadian Summits. R.W. Sandford and Geoff Powter. Alpine Club of Canada, Canmore, Alberta, 1994. 189 pages, innumerable black-and-white photographs. \$24.95 Canadian (paper).

When I was asked to review this book, sight unseen, I replied, sighing, “I suppose it’s a coffee-table book with a lot of Canadian nationalism in it.” Well, that does pretty much say it, except the nationalism is mercifully muted compared to much of the contemporary mountain literature emanating from Canada these days. Indeed, nearly one-fourth of the 36 selections from the *Canadian Alpine Journal* here presented were written by American climbers active in Canada—from Fay and MacCarthy to Fred Beckey and Ed Cooper—and another quarter are by non-native Canadians such as Conrad Kain and Hans Gmoser. Actually it could hardly be otherwise, because *Canadian* climbing as opposed to climbing in Canada is a phenomenon of the last two or three decades. This book purports to trace the evolution of Canadian climbing to the present day, when at last they have taken possession of their own climbing scene, albeit with the very active participation of transplanted British hard men.

It is difficult to discern a rationale for the articles in *Canadian Summits*. True, they are in chronological order, which provides a flimsy kind of coherence. Several deal with landmark ascents—the first ascents of Robson, Bugaboo Spire and Waddington, the east face of Snowpatch Spire and the north face of Temple—but others are of a more ruminative or philosophical sort. It is only fair to point out that a large majority of the major peaks, in the Rockies and Interior Ranges anyway, had already been ascended before the Alpine Club of Canada was founded: so that truly significant climbs were by then harder to find. Certainly literary merit is not always a criterion for inclusion, although some are well-written. Political correctness is a possible candidate, since 20% of the selections were written by female climbers. Ten of the 36 articles (28%) are drawn from the last eight journals, an overly heavy representation of the current scene. These shorter pieces are replete with contemporary argot and not infrequently are of the “in-your-face” school of writing.

Coffee-table books typically depend on breathtaking photographs. With the exception of the covers, these are all black-and-white. Some are so-so, especially the archival ones, others are fine, but none are truly stunning. As often as not, the photo accompanying a specific article does not pertain to the text.

Another *caveat*: the marginal comments of the editors do not add anything. They tend to be breezy, use modern jargon, and seem not in keeping with the tone of the articles to which they are meant to support or explain.

This book is an exercise in nostalgia. It would appear directed toward old-timers like me, who were active when some of the exploits chronicled happened and who may have known some of the perpetrators as well. (I was there when Fred Beckey was nailing the East Face of Snowpatch!). In his introduction, Geoff Powter, the current editor of the *Canadian Alpine Journal*, identifies his audience as those who are not so fortunate as to own a complete set of *Canadian Alpine Journals*. It is supposed to give those readers a feeling for the ongoing mountain adventure chronicled in the 77 volumes of this ancient and estimable publication. As one of the fortunate owners and avid readers of the complete set, I think Geoff and his colleague, Bob Sandford, have in the main succeeded in communicating a rich tapestry of Canadian adventure.

ROBERT KRUSZYNA

Mountaineering In Patagonia. Alan Kearney. Cloudcap, Seattle, Washington, 1993. Hardcover. 143 pages, 24 color photos, maps, topos.

Having climbed in Patagonia on three separate occasions, I am an aficionado. My infatuation with the region has led me to buy numerous books, as well as to write several accounts of my trips for climbing magazines. Lacking in the realm of English-language climbing books (and my library) has been a comprehensive tome, similar to the work produced by Italians Gino Buscaini and Silvia Metzeltin, *Patagonia*.

Several years ago I heard rumblings of a book on Patagonia being worked on by Alan Kearney and I waited for its debut with enthusiasm. Moments after eventually seeing it for sale in the Chessler Books catalog, I was on the phone with my credit card. "Overnight Delivery," I said. I can still recall my anticipation of the book's arrival, and my first look at it—smaller than expected; excellent quality photos; not a guidebook (which is how the publisher describes the book). At the conclusion of my first reading of the book I felt that the text was informative and well written; the photographs deserved to be displayed in a larger format, and the information was quite comprehensive and useful.

Nearly a year later, I was asked to write this review. This assignment caused me to revisit my initial reactions to the book. Having written and published climbing guidebooks, I know that economics drive the publishing business. Unfortunately, mountaineering book sales in America just aren't large enough to support an expensive, coffee-table sized book on a place as far away as Patagonia, let alone popular rock-climbing areas in the states. Within its scant 143 pages, *Mountaineering In Patagonia* contains accounts of important ascents, an expedition planner, a list of all climbing routes, a bibliography, and a glossary. This shotgun approach might prevent anyone else in America from publishing a profitable, large-scale climbing book on Patagonia. This is good news for both Kearney and Cloudcap, but bad news for those of us that want bigger, more plentiful photos of climbing in Patagonia and a comprehensive