

the book is better suited to the Scramblers and Hikers in its subtitle, rather than the Climbers, although the author does mention a number of undeveloped areas of potential technical interest. Whether hardman or hiker, however, *Exploring Idaho's Mountains* is a great start for getting where you want to go in Idaho's mountains.

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*The Canadian Alps: The History of Mountaineering in Canada, Volume 1.*

Robert W. Sandford. Altitude Publishing, Banff, 1990. 296 pages, numerous illustrations and black-and-white photographs.

I knew I was getting old, but, until I started reading this book, I was unaware how far out of touch I had become. I had been accustomed to two basic sorts of history books: the scholarly tome replete with facts, details and closely reasoned analysis, and the popular history which reads like a novel, *à la* the late-lamented Barbara Tuchman's *The Guns of August*. Imagine my perplexity upon encountering chapter titles like "The Nature of the Mountain" and "Geogenesis." And upon reading lines that speak of "mountaineering as a vehicle for establishing personal spiritual authenticity" or which ask "What is a mountain? It is a spirit percolating healing skyward through the peaks." This type of flowery prose continues for some 30-odd pages, while the author warms to the subject of Canadian mountaineering by discussing the "Big Bang," the medieval Church's attitude toward mountains (diabolical places, apparently), and winding up with a description of Whymper's accident on the Matterhorn.

I tried my best to wade through this New Age, World Fusion spirituality and sensitivity stuff, but finally I was forced to flip forward to find facts. To give the author credit, he provides plenty of dates and details, which he organizes in a reasonably coherent way. Here he shifts from his flowery and convoluted style, with occasional relapses, to a more prosaic one that is in keeping with the nature of the material. There is a certain amount of jarring jargon: "cut a deal," "stiff-upper-lip-land," etc. The author quotes extensively from journal articles and books; in particular, several pages are given over to C.A. Fay's account of Abbot's fatal accident on Mount Lefroy. I had thought that one function of the historian is to *extract* information and to *emphasize* what is important. In passing, the amount of space devoted to the Lefroy accident and, earlier, the Matterhorn incident makes me wonder if the author has a fixation on the gory side of the sport. In addition to the quotations embedded in the text, there are numerous others in boldface set into the outer margins which are a distraction.

Returning to the matter of facts, I detected a number of errors. On the now famous expedition when J. Norman Collie discovered the Columbia Icefield, he is described as camping on the watershed between the Saskatchewan and Athabasca Rivers. Collie camped at what is now called Sunwapta Pass, the watershed between the Saskatchewan and Sunwapta drainages. Perhaps the author was confused by the fact that the Athabasca *Glacier* flows into the Sunwapta River.

Another error practically leaped from the page. Charles A. Fay, one of the prime movers of Canadian alpinism, is described as a professor at *Harvard*. I suppose it's part of the stereotype: all prominent people from the eastern US are associated with either Harvard or Yale. In point of fact, Charles Fay was perhaps the most prominent alumnus of Tufts College, where he spent his long and distinguished career as professor and dean.

Content and style aside, this book has grievous defects. Typographical or spelling errors occur on average about once a page. Frequently, letters are squeezed together in order to make more words fit on a line, which makes the text difficult to read. Conversely, the hyphenation at the ends of lines often does not conform to grammatical rules. On page 147, we have the name "Thompson" broken at the end of a line thus: Th- ompson!

What does this book supplant or improve upon? Two other "popular" histories come to mind. *The Canadian Rockies* (1969) by Esther Fraser, while rather less detailed and equally superficial, remains a serviceable overview of the subject. Chris Jones' *Climbing in North America* (1976) fits Canadian alpinism into the larger picture and thus is necessarily selective in its coverage. On the other hand, Jones offers causal analysis and the insight of the practicing mountaineer, along with a vivid writing style, all things which are lacking in this and Fraser's book.

So what we have here is a book about the history of mountaineering written by someone who is neither historian nor mountaineer. It is the work of a professional writer, whose success in other venues induced an Alberta foundation to subsidize a project intended essentially to advertise the glories of the province. It is the work of a modern media man. For nearly forty years, I have climbed in the mountains which form the subject of this book and have delved into their lore and history, but this work has failed to engage my interest.

ROBERT KRUSZYNA

*The Mountains of Europe*. Kev Reynolds, Editor; various contributors. Oxford Illustrated Press, Haynes Publishing Group, Starkford-near-Yeovil, Somerset, England; Haynes Publications, Ltd., Newbury Park, California, 91320. 207 pages, 51 color and 18 black-and-white illustrations. U.K. price £ 19.95 (approx. \$US 37.00).

This book is addressed not only to serious mountaineers, but to all lovers of mountains. Its purpose, the editor tells us, is to enthuse and inform—also, he should have added, to educate.

Except for the Apennines, the text covers all Europe's mountain areas—a big order for a relatively short book. Kev Reynolds and his colleagues acquit themselves well, though some readers may complain about omissions. The writers all know their business. There are, however, rare typographical errors, notably in the translation of French names into English. Much of the content is necessarily broad-brush, but it is always interesting.