

These fine articles on "small-scale fisheries" tell readers today of the past and the future. Collectively they offer a wide range of readings on the topic of fisheries and fishing communities, from biological concerns to patriarchy, from economics to ecology, from commercialization to colonialism. One lesson that readers can take from the book is that while many of these small-scale Native and non-Native fisheries managed to thrive for generations, these communities cannot compete with large-scale commercial fisheries that have no concern for long-term certainty or reliability of local stocks. Another lesson is that, while local communities are the first to recognize environmental changes, they cannot adequately provide feedback about larger ecological considerations. An inability to communicate results from language barriers. Local fishers rarely speak the language of science or commerce, the two predominant languages of fisheries management in Canada (and in the case of Native languages this was doubly so).

One more lesson I wanted to highlight was that, even if fishing communities are voters (or as was the case with historical Native fishers, as "wards"), they cannot muster sufficient political and social clout to influence centralized decision-making ("Indian fish" were colonized). What we learn from *Fishing Places, Fishing People* is that small-scale fishing communities are like many small resource-based communities: inevitably these people are those who pay the rent for undervalued resources and unaccounted-for costs (these places become the sink for the by-products of large-scale economic development).

Arnold Ruskell. *Breaking the Ice: An Arctic Odyssey*. Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, Quebec: Shoreline, 1997, 158 pp., maps, illus.

Review by William R. Morrison, University of Northern British Columbia.

Arnold Ruskell was born in 1919 in County Wicklow, in what was soon to become the Irish Free State. His family was Anglo-Irish, and judging from the size of their home, a prosperous one. By the time he was old enough to be aware of events, the Irish "troubles" had ended, and his childhood was idyllic. At the age of twelve he felt a call to the ministry (Church of England, it hardly need be said), and was sent to boarding school. His description of his Sunday mornings shows how times have changed in secondary education:

As I was destined for Holy Orders, extra Greek was now added to my curriculum. . . . The boarders . . . were required to do an hour's

prep [homework] . . . on Sunday mornings, half an hour reading the Bible, and half an hour writing letters home. Another senior student, also a prospective ordinand, and I were excused on the grounds that we would spend the hour with the senior classics master studying the Greek New Testament.

Not just Greek – everyone took that – but extra Greek, a subject he studied for six years before he got to university. At Trinity College, University of Dublin, he studied arts and theology, and was ordained in 1942, working for three years as a curate in Irish parishes. In 1945 he volunteered for a foreign mission, choosing the Canadian Arctic over Madras – he preferred cold to heat – and the next year found himself at Fort Chimo (Kuujuaq) on Ungava Bay. He served in the region for five years, until 1951.

It would not be difficult to compile at short notice a substantial list of memoirs written by those who served in the Canadian Arctic in the years before 1960. Missionaries, explorers, Mounties, fur traders, doctors, government officials, and in some cases their wives, came to the North, fell in love with it, left it eventually, and wrote their reminiscences of it. It would be wrong as well as impertinent to suggest that these books are all the same, but their tone is quite often very similar. These people, most but not all of them men, came north, met the Inuit, liked them, had exciting experiences, coped with the climate and the primitive (by modern standards) conditions, survived, and kept happy memories for the rest of their lives.

Breaking the Ice is very much of this type. Ruskell was interested in everything, accepted northern conditions, and entered enthusiastically into the activities of northern life. An athlete in college, he was able to participate in long sled trips with the Inuit; his name in Inuktitut – Peejooktuk – meant “the one who walks,” a tribute to his stamina. As a missionary he was quite accepting of Inuit beliefs and customs, and, in sharp contrast to some missionaries of an earlier period, did not consider them to be depraved and ignorant children.

This book is short and to the point, and full of anecdotes – an easy and interesting read. There are sixteen full-page colour photographs and, considering that they were taken fifty years ago, their colour has lasted remarkably well. I thought they were modern until I noticed details such as the ones in the photo of the man trading at the Hudson’s Bay post; the labels are of an earlier era, and he is paying in HBC tokens rather than Canadian money.

In short, this is an engaging book, a worthy addition to the genre.
