

Arctic Reflections: Travel and Filmmaking on the Horton River

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1 Preparation:

I've been to this place before ...this mental space of preparing for a long solo canoe trip in the arctic. I rehearse all of the familiar uncertainties: about logistics, water levels, communications, rapids, possible equipment failure, extremes of weather, distances, and animal encounters. There are more than enough practical details to manage, and numerous other unknowns that it is impossible to anticipate until you are already there. I've learned many years ago that it is around these many unknowns that self doubts make an earnest effort to grasp a foothold, congregate in clusters, germinate in the most challenging of climates, and build up momentum. It is a natural process, not an unnatural one, and one that often leads to the happy faults of over preparation.

But uncertainties and the unknown have another register ...discovery and wonderment. And a wilderness canoe trip is a distinct kind of journey. The more you

open yourself up to a place, talking to people about their travels, reading historical or cultural accounts, going out on the land, an odd reversal starts to take place. Doubts turn to possibilities, questions to introspection, grandeur to humility, and novelty to comforting routine. A far place can be cordoned off in your mind. A foreign landscape. A near place is the opposite: elusive, difficult to pin down, and with many of the same complexities and paradoxes that pertain to other intimate and familiar relationships. Once you cross that threshold of distance, you begin to view your surroundings and yourself in a unique and different way. Traveling for me often involves negotiating these previous and complex relationships, and discovering things anew. I am always looking for a window onto the past, how we know what we know, even if it may be from the center seat of a Nova Craft Super Nova.



2 Photography and Video:

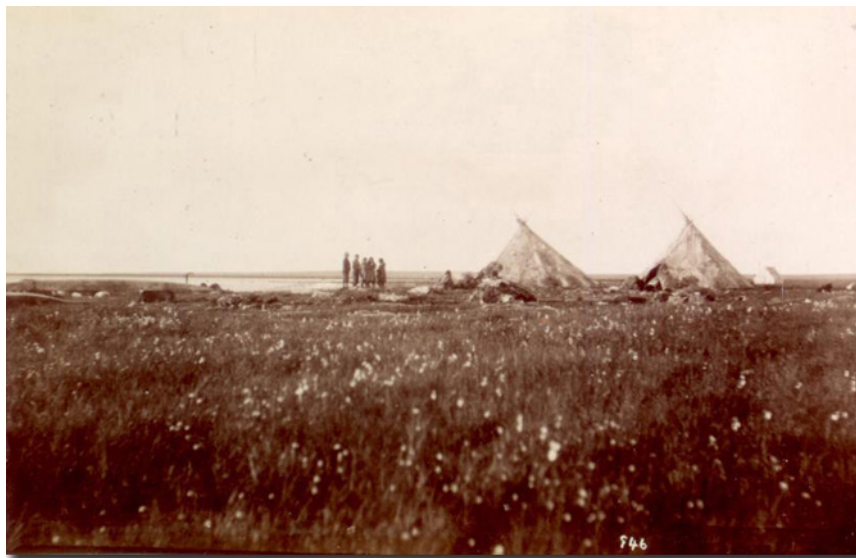
I take with me a video camera on my trip. It's a marvelous device. Made of a collection of mysterious and interconnected parts. It's an enigma (to me at least) wrapped up in an attractive and utilitarian puzzle. A lens element of seven carefully crafted optical components to minimize distortion, a prism to isolate and direct three different wavelengths of light, 3 panels of CCD photodiodes that capture light intensity in one direction and charge thousands of individual capacitors, and a microprocessor to interpret the electronic signals, run the device, and assemble the data (24 times every second) into a usable form for recording, editing, and projecting equipment.

The object lies inert, an over engineered paper weight, until it is turned on and draws energy from it's power source. And then it comes alive. Like a sled

dog pulling a heavy load under long hours of arctic twilight, it wants to be put to work: recording, documenting, adjusting itself to the ever changing qualities of light. It's a mechanical eye that records what it sees, and the user can direct its purpose to color and shape what it sees with ever finer adjustments to exposure, iris, color hue, shadow detail, and the like. In some respects, it is like a travel partner, especially on a solo trip. One has to understand its demands, and learn how seeing through another set of eyes can reshape your orientation to light, color, fleeting objects, passing moments, places, spaces, and other relationships in your physical surroundings.

Many of the explorers and early travelers to the North took great pains to document and bring back images from their trips. They wanted to show undocumented lands, bear witness to their travels and discoveries, and provide illustrations to their popular and scientific writings. In an institutional setting where the financing of trips often depended on stimulating and shaping the public interest, photography and travel writing became an important tool for raising public awareness and documenting the spirit of adventure of a northern expedition. Informing an audience, or relating to an unknown but imagined group of consumers, viewers, financiers, policy makers, national citizens and journalists has always been a central feature of northern travel.

In 1893, the Tyrrell Brothers (looking to make their mark on northern exploration and Barren Lands geography) listed among their expedition outfit various mathematical instruments, magnetic navigation aids, and a small camera. Listed as next in importance to "good boats" and "canoeman," such items were "not bulky," they wrote, but "comprised a part of our outfit over which much care had to be exercised throughout the journey" (1897:10).



J. B. Tyrrell, "Eskimo Camp on Barren Lands, with reindeer that had been speared laying about," 1894

David Hanbury, traveling for happiness and sport, used some of Tyrrell's beau-

tiful sepia toned photos to illustrate his own book, but also took some of his own. When enough provisions had been obtained in the chase, he often turned to photography. He writes about an encounter with a musk-ox:

One remained close to us while we were pitching the tent in the evening. He did not appear disposed to move off, I took my camera and approached within about thirty yards, when I snapshotted him. He remained feeding on the willows, so I went still nearer. He showed no sign of fear, but I did, for I carried no arms. I ascended a small knoll below which he was feeding, and thus got within a few yards of him and snapshotted him again. I then wished for another shot in a different position, so I threw a piece of rock at him, which only produced an angry shake of the head (1904:39).

The minimalist Vilhjalmur Stefansson spent two winters on the Horton. I'll have more to say about him later. He attempted to make bare necessities a virtue, and sought to advocate "living like the Inuit" as a prime modality for scientific expeditions to the North. "Do in Rome as the Romans do" was a manta he often repeated in technical papers and at the public lectern. At the beginning of his 1908 four year expedition to the North, he writes:

In accord with my own plan, [I now found myself] set down two hundred miles north of the polar circle, with a summer suit of clothing, a camera, some notebooks, a rifle, and about two hundred rounds of ammunition, facing an Arctic winter, where my only shelter would have to be the roof of some hospitable Eskimo house. These were ideal conditions for me (1921:2).

Stefansson's partner in the expedition, the zoologist Dr. Rudolph M. Anderson, would often travel separately under similar austere conditions with his own camera kit.

The first technique for photographic reproduction was pioneered in 1839 by Louis-Jacques Mand Daguerre . . . the daguerretype. It was a one of a kind process that involved long exposures, highly toxic chemicals, and produced a single delicate image that had to be protected under glass. An important early promoter of the Daguerrotype in polar expeditions was the inventor and scientist Sir John Herschel, for whom Herschel Island was named (an important jumping off point for the Stefansson-Anderson Expedition near the Alaska and Yukon border). It was Sir Herschel who also coined the term "photography" in a 1839 paper to the Royal Society. Herschel secured the rights to use the proprietary process on early scientific and natural history expeditions to Antarctica and Australia. But very few of these early images survive. In northern expeditions, the early task of image reproduction often fell to the surgeons, or those with a skill (like Sir George Back) in painting.

Because of these early ventures and the history of image reproduction in the North . . . carrying a camera for me evokes a certain feeling. I look again at the vast distances stretched out before me as other visitors and explorers may have seen

them. And there is always the possibility (however remote), that someone else may view my images. This constant presence on a trip is an incentive to see things differently. Look closely at your surroundings, notice those small and imperceptible changes in light, color intensity, movement, and texture of objects that may indicate a “good shot.” It encourages thoughtfulness, self-awareness, creative risk taking, and even ties you to a few of those social norms and moral constraints of home, as you bring with you a world of conscious and thoughtful others from the other side of the camera lens.

And you never really know what you are going to find, as conditions change from day to day. Chance and timing (what my Dene friends call luck) are key elements you can’t directly control, key features of the unknown. I find joy and fulfillment in this uncertainty . . . and the mindful imperative to keep filming, keep paddling, enjoy the journey, prepare yourself for anything, and be ready for change.



A camera brings me deeper into a place, a kind of consciousness, and even connects me across vastly different spaces and times. It’s a connecting device as well as a recording and communicating one. And when I am back home, the light from a trip, the light projected onto this screen, remains indexically anchored to those events. It is a mnemonic, a remembrance . . . and for others, I hope an invitation to share in my journey.

July 06, 2007

[I’m on the Horton] the area is astoundingly beautiful. Large multicolored cobbles. Gentle sloping hills. Sparse trees accentuating the ridge lines, and a swift shallow river running through the middle of it. We landed our massive Twin Otter on an exposed gravel bar on an inside

bend of the river. There are wildflowers everywhere: finding damp soil between the cobbles, in the brush near the high water mark, and running up the hills in the shade of the standing timber. The water is astounding, an iridescent and translucent green . . . picking up all the subtle hues of river stones. The distances are starting to emerge . . . the vast landscape between myself and coffee shops, hotels, box stores, and paved roads. There is history on the river: Inuvialuit caribou pounds and tent ring sites, explorer cabins, and prehistoric fossils. And down stream: herds of musk-ox, caribou, wolves, brown bears, and birds. The birds are singing now, an occasional twitter or melody. The conversation on the wind has an audience and it settles my mind.

The Horton had eluded geographers for many years. Its actual location and course was not communicated to the outside world (with any precision) until the advent of aerial photography, and the Topographical Surveys of the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1949 (Fraser 1952). Another image making process, or arctic reflection, laid out in mathematical precision over a well defined grid pattern.

In 1826, Dr. John Richardson (part of the eastern detachment of the Second Expedition of Sir John Franklin) sailed past the mouth of the river, and noted large quantities of driftwood along the shore, speculating on a major river course to the interior. Caribou, fish, and timber are the mainstays of the Horton. Archaeological sites abound, and attest to the long and continuous use of the area by Dene and Inuvialuit hunters and trappers. And in the heyday of the industry, arctic whalers, some of whom were Inupiat laborers working for sailing outfits out of Herschel Island, sometimes found shelter and sustenance along the lower river. A major tributary to the Horton is named for them . . . the Whalemens River.

It was the adventuring linguist, ethnographer, and Oblate missionary Father Emile Petitot who first provided an early map of the interior in 1875. He speculated on the course of the Horton (which he called the MacFarlane River) based on his knowledge of the geography around Great Bear Lake, native testimony, and the account of Roderick MacFarlane, then a clerk at the Hudson's Bay Company who established a short lived trading post on the Anderson River (another major river in the area). Among his many passions, Petitot was fond of following river courses and mushing to undocumented lands, and took as one of his goals the discovery of the true source of the Anderson River. This was eventually his due after five separate trips, and in 1871 he traveled to this sine qua non (a "terra incognita" as he called it) and found, what would you think: a caribou palisade, seven large Dene lodges, and a Scottish trader from Fort Norman-Franklin out on a fishing trip and camped near the source (1893: 379). "So much for my glory as an explorer," he wrote. He spent many years in his retirement writing up his northern travels, and his linguistic and ethnographic work adds to a substantive northern archive.

In 1909, Stefansson was next in the queue of explorers, and took with him Petitot's map (which he knew had many unanswered questions). He and a retinue of up to 6 Inupiat and Inuvialuit colleagues and assistants arrived at Cape Bathurst after sailing east from Herschel Island on the famed Karluk, a vessel that would later become stuck in ice on a subsequent expedition to the peril of half of its 22

passengers. In this more hopeful year, Stefansson and his crew explored in the vicinity of Parry Peninsula, and later headed overland on foot and dogsled to establish winter quarters near the Horton River. It was the chase and survival that dictated Stefansson's movements. He explored much of the lower river in search of caribou, and traveled twice the full length of the Horton by dogsled. For Stefansson, the Horton was a sanctuary and training ground, a place of respite and lean abundance, where he could hone his arctic skills and refine his methods for the main push to Victoria Island. He returned to the area the following year, and wrote:

... it seemed to be such a picturesque spot in which to spend the winter – so promising in the comfort of the deep spruce-wooded valley and in the resources of the fishing lake at the head of the creek, where we had always found the caribou plentiful whenever we sought them the winter before ... on September 16th [1910] we moved camp down into the bottomlands of Coal Creek, about half a mile east from Horton River, at a place where I intended we should build our winter house (1921:339).

3 The River:

Bathed in 24 hours of summer sun, the entire Horton lies north of the Arctic Circle. Before I arrived in early July, the river had been exposed to nearly a month of constant summer sun, and was even a little warm. There are three sections. The upper river flows through a well defined valley some 500-800 feet deep made up of steep banks of scree, fractured rocks, bedrock shale, and cretaceous sandstone.



Around the base of these hills are often cooler springs of nutrient rich water providing an environment for dense weed patches and tremulous cover to feeding grayling and lake trout. The river sits in a large cobble field, and twists and turns around ledges and other obstacles following the contours of the steep and forested river valley.

The middle river gathers momentum and is constrained by the jagged walls of a series of short canyons. Slabs of sediment hardened into stone: eroded, jumbled, toppled, interrupted by tributaries and drainage channels, the river passes by sentinels of stone, and is constrained by ledges and numerous Class I and II rapids.



The lower river opens up into a broad valley. Trees give way to tundra, and rocky shores to sulfur seeps, piles of sand, and fantastic eroded slopes of mud (up to 1,000 feet tall). It's a stunning land, the badlands of the Smoking Hills, and it is the highlight of the trip. The earth burns in sulfurous bocannes, and leaves behind delicate hues of red, lime, yellow, and orange. From any height of land, golden sandy arroyos form a continuous line of alternating ridges as far as the eye can see. Cinnamon reds and lurid yellows, moonscapes of mud and verdant hills of green, gasping clouds of smoke and cooling mists of ocean fog, the landscape defies neutral description.

In my journal entry for July 14, I am enjoying a layover day in the canyon, and an extended period of rest as storms and cold weather move in from the coast and overwhelm me for the next three days. Spending time out in the rain builds a sense of inner resourcefulness . . . to stay dry, to eat well, and to pass the time in productive pursuits. I have my camp perched high above the canyon, and time to read and absorb my surroundings.



July 14, 2007

The sun makes another circle overhead, and I stay put. The wind is blowing to a gale outside, and I have retreated to the tent for a 30 minute nap. I feel totally protected inside my tent, and it is a delightful surprise to emerge to the wind and cool mist. Here is where I am. It is like a cocoon falling off, and one stands on top of the view, a pebble dropped in an immense lake. In a month, one cannot touch it all. I see only the highlights, and try to look at the small and imperceptible things. I try to imagine the water flowing over the sand bar in spring, carving out new pockets, and uprooting young willows. I try to visualize the innumerable blocks of ice scouring the shore, sometimes peeling the bark off mature black spruce trees. And the stillness of winter, with its howling winds, sprays of stars and northern lights, and the brightness of the moon.

I am here at this hottest time of the year, and I would like to see a time lapsed movie of the tundra coming to bloom . . . rivulets of meltwater, the first shoots of spring, summer wildflowers and pollinators, the brittle and orange hues of autumn, and the first wet snows of Fall.

Would it seem like a living surface, a plow tilling the land, blankets of different textures rolled back upon the earth? But no-one sees this way, this is the living history of time, a spirit with neither eyes nor an interest in remembering, only the “now” stretched out in eons and millennia. For time, woolly mammoths were yesterday, paddlers today.



My journal is a familiar home, a refuge at the end of the day. It is another way of thinking, reflecting on my time in the wilderness. My camera looks, and my hands see, and I enjoy the moments of quiet reflection at the end of the day . . . thinking as only one can do with a pen between your fingers.

Journals are as various as the people who write them . . . another ubiquitous reflection of the North. Traders keeping accounting books, travelers recording their thoughts, explorers documenting new lands and the assistance of indigenous guides . . . each attempting to hold onto and shape a moment, capture the immediacy of a situation, record the metrics of a trip, and fix something of the experience for themselves. After 10 days on the trip, I look to my journal to renew my sense of connection to the land . . . a dialogue with myself, a mysterious reverence, and a reminder to remain open to new creative possibilities and personal discoveries.

July 16, 2007

Some things are unparalleled: twilight sun at midnight, walking an ancient caribou pound on a remote arctic plain, camping on a gravel bar on the Horton River. The sun shines on everything, telling you there is much to see. After a big meal, go hiking. Hear the arctic heather crunch under your feet. On the way back to camp, dig your paddle in a crystal clear northern stream that flows to the Beaufort Sea. The grayling abound. Insects are minimized by the wind. Sing some strange tune at the top of your lungs . . . who would know, the terns have their own sour cry. And the scene stretches for as far as the eye can see and a person can walk in a month. Alone, there is no word for it here. You have constant company awake and at night. Dreams . . . a year's worth of impressions filtered late at night. You yearn for more, you try to comprehend what

you can't understand, you try to see what you are not seeing, and you want to get closer. Commune. Shed layers of civility, politeness, and custom. Bath your hands in rocks, make fire with water, and obtain nourishment from the sun. Shut your eyes to see (to feel). The caribou follow a path . . . what is yours?

Indeed, I spend a good deal of time looking for caribou on the hillsides. In this northern arctic prairie, the historical patterns of human footprints have always followed those of the caribou. They appear like mirages when you least expect them, their brown coats blending in perfectly with the steep eroded banks and the vast gravel bars of the river. Almost daily, I see caribou on the trip.



July 25, 2007

They were clumped together in pockets on a large gravel bar. Dark grey masses, sprouting antlers to the sky . . . kicking at haunches, licking limbs, and scratching away at felt. The females were more vigilant than the males, prancing about in alert hyperactive attention.

I had no good approach, the gravel bar was very shallow. I clamored to shore with all my gear, still far enough away to not be much of a threat. Then I thought I could soften my presentation some. I attached my camera to the tripod and held it over my head: the camera mimicking antlers, and the tripod presenting the illusion of legs. It didn't have much of an effect.

They started slowly walking to the water as I neared. And for the next 15 minutes, I watch 200 caribou ford a branch of the Horton and travel up a small pocket canyon in the distance, almost immediately becoming hidden from view. A quick and convenient escape. No alarm, no haste, just maintain a distance and keep walking on the hoof.

For early travelers, caribou were hope, grace, an abundant gift one day and an elusive promise the next. I feel little of the urgency of early travelers of this time: I can pack in sufficient food for a trip, arrive and depart at my convenience, and communicate easily with the outside world. And yet, the sight of a caribou still stops my heart and mind, and reminds me of the delicate and necessary balance between humans and the natural world. It is one of the reasons why I go on trips like this, to visit places where others have lived, may continue to trap and maintain a life on the land, and explore the interconnectedness that exists between people and places. One July 16, I visit an old Inuvialuit caribou capturing site near the Whaleman River. A running fence, a living site, and natural barriers to guide and direct the migrating herds.

July 16, 2007

I traveled up the ridge to the exposed treeless plain on the opposite shore, and found the fence first – made of wood, like desiccated bones on the ground, and surrounded by innumerable stumps cut down over generations. I followed the remains of the fence for some 200 yards to the edge of a long and narrow lake, another natural barrier. Framed on one side by a ridge, and on the other by a lake, the fence is a human construct directing the natural movements of the herd. Walking further down the shores of the lake, near where the lake joins the river, I found the living site. No rings of stone, but circles free of underbrush, raised in the middle, fringed by wet looking moss on the outside, and a few caribou bones scattered about.

There are boundaries all though the Horton. Seagulls don't like to share their perches. I'm camped on the shallow tip of a large island, hemmed in on one side by water and on the other by a colony of terns fiercely defending their borders. The caribou fence is a marvelously imaginative structure. It allows the land to be put to human uses, for communities to thrive in times of abundance. All of the elements of the area work together to produce a caribou hunting ground: the exposed ridge line, the natural barrier of the lake, the shore of the river, the boundary line of the fence, and the recessed living site in the trees. I think of all the generations of people who stood on these hills, and looked out over this landscape thinking who knows what, who knows when, tracking seasonal animal movements, coordinating human labor, refining knowledge and technique, and giving thanks for the gifts of the land.

After two or three weeks on the Horton, I start to make the river a little bit of a home for myself. The memory of my early days on the trip start to slip out of mind, and I become occupied with the daily routine of laundry, setting up camp, packing a canoe, and cooking meals. These are really rewarding and familiar experiences for me, slowly adapting to a place and adjusting your perspective to the scale of a wilderness trip. My mind is no longer fixated on the entire goal (as it was in planning), but merely on the next couple of days, my immediate surroundings,

and the necessary tasks close at hand. I take special note of this slow transformation over time: early exultation to subdued contentment, the comforting habit of routine, and the joys of welcoming each day for its unexpected gifts.



Certain images always stick with me from a trip, but it is nearly impossible to predict what these may be in advance. It could be something trivial: an unnamed tributary, a collection of gear at the end of a portage, an erratic boulder that looks out of place on a hillside. Or it could be something more dramatic: an animal encounter, a hike to a spectacular overlook, or a double rainbow with arctic wildflowers in the foreground. The imagination and physical senses seem so intimately conjoined. There are so many different ways to see, hear, reflect, know, grasp at a place with your mind, and fill in the details with emotional color and feeling. Remembering and discovering a landscape may itself become a product of habit. A new place that emerges from day to day, an arrangement of physical properties and colors you come to accept as characteristic and beautiful. Beyond merely the physical act of looking, seeing may involve experiences of recognition and acknowledgement, a sense of familiarity and comparison, judgment and apperception, and contact with other imagined spaces and times.

July 14, 2007

What is it that stimulates awe: the humbling scale of mountains, the soft pastels of a flower, the muscle of a river forced through a cataract? We build up associations over time and across new experiences: at that place where we caught that tricky trout one twilight evening. When someone laughed at our stories around the campfire. When we canoed

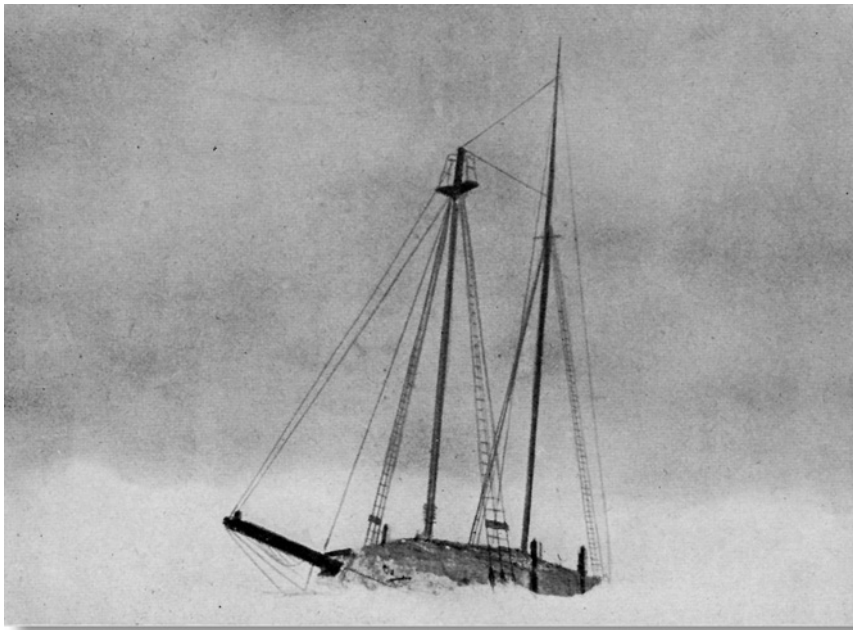
to some unimaginable place on a map filled with stillness and solemnity. And we hear other people tell stories and describe places they have been . . . a social space of mutual and shared cultural appreciation. Is there something like a language or visual grammar that exists for linking visual impressions to interior thoughts and moods: a way of perceiving the land (or even determining what constitutes “land”) that has to be learned? I find the idea intriguing, and a powerful incentive to continue to learn and ask questions about what other people find curious, interesting, impressionable, or beautiful about a place.

I’d like to return once last time to Stefansson. On August 02, I hike over the low coastal hills separating Franklin Bay from the Horton River and get my first view of the Arctic Ocean. It’s an alluring image and a captivating moment, one drawing heavily on Stefansson’s own account of yearning and reprieve along the Coast. The expedition had wintered on the Horton for two consecutive seasons, and stored much of its essential gear on the Coast: caches of meat, seal oil, guns and ammunition, tents, scientific specimens, and other necessary items. The expedition also had a safety valve, the *Rosie H.*, a whaling schooner piloted by Captain Wolki, parked in winter ice behind the Booth Islands half a day’s journey from the mouth of the Horton. I was drawn to the story several weeks before, the elusive promise of the ship off-shore, and the narrative of hardship, precarious winter survival, and sacrifice on the Horton.



The expedition had fallen on lean times: wolverines had plundered their food reserves, Dr. Anderson had contracted pneumonia, and the expedition party at Coal Creek was without seal oil and unable to find caribou for weeks. Facing unwelcome

future prospects, they made a mad dash for food reserves on the Coast, and thoughts of the Rosie H. provided balm and nourishment to their essential endeavors. As if to justify its actual physical existence, Stefansson included a photo of the boat in his account: the ethereal “Rosie H. in Winter Quarters” (1921:151). It is one of my favorite photos from the expedition. The prow juts out of the captive ice, a ghostly apparition. The rigging looks artificial, flimsy like a toy model. The boat is heeled on it’s side, half absorbed by ice. It’s a fitting tribute for a lengthy northern venture, hopes and dreams surrounded by ice, and a well designed craft (a safe harbor) to carry a load in the most challenging of circumstances.



*Vilhjalmur Stefansson, “The Rosie H.
in Winter Quarters,” 1921*

The Arctic Ocean is phenomenal. A deep blue body of water, islands in the distance, smoking hills throughout, with the same strange rock, sand, and mud formations as along the river. And on the beach: gentle waves and flat pebbles the color of red ochre. Nearly two years ago, I stood at the junction of the Elk and Thelon Rivers, some 1200 kilometers to the south and east. I have now traveled 27 days on the Horton. It is August, and the sun is threatening to drop below the horizon. The Horton and I are concluding on a grace note. One of those cloudless evening nights, minimal wind, and spectacular views.

4 Conclusion:

Frankly, I never know fully what to expect from a trip, and each trip is different. I have tried to look at this presentation as an opportunity to consider some of my motivations, and to describe why I enjoy traveling with a camera so much.

There are certainly moments of sublime beauty and feelings of solemnity that draw my interest and attention. But more than this, I believe it has something to do with growing up in a place where canoeing was a major part of the culture of the outdoors. It has a lot to do with my intellectual interests: learning, visiting, and reading about the cultures of the North, First Nations struggles for self-determination, the challenges of sustainability in a modern consumer culture, and the imaginary landscape of the remote “Arctic”: austere and desolate to some, friendly (as Stefansson was fond of writing) and accommodating to others. And the camera gives me a venue for exploring some of these themes, how meaning is made in a place, and how thought, mind, history, culture, and land flow together. But all of these words and contexts merely hint at a few aspects of the profound transformation that takes place in the consciousness of a paddler on a remote wilderness canoe trip. I am still trying to understand this transformation, and it is comforting for me to know that other people are interested in these endeavors, and can in some respects share in the journey.



August 02, 2007

My final task of the trip [and the final task of this presentation]: walking the banks of the Horton. The hills seem subtly alive, undulating under the greenery, like a subtle sigh. The green is so strong, it literally drapes the hillsides. Walking the river bank, hardened by sun and dry arctic air, the land is criss-crossed with deep and well worn animal trails. Familiar paths, stretching back across generations to a continuum of life, human possibilities, and sustainability. I look out at the moon overhead, and the sun still shines twilight colors on the hills in the distance.

I can travel anywhere from here, venture off with Stefansson to Victoria Island, travel again through the canyon in sight and sound, or listen for the harassing calls of gyrfalcons in the pages of my journal. For me, it's not the end of a trip, but a beginning. New experiences mix with old, and I have images and narratives to last a lifetime. A plane will be here in the morning to pick me up, "load" all my gear and transport it to another location. It is really a miraculous thing. The whole trip has been a splendid joy. I give thanks for my time on the river, and hope to visit again should I be so lucky.

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