

*A History of the Mounted Police in the Yukon, 161–162*, also reviewed in this volume of the *Northern Review*).

*The Last Patrol* is an easy read with intriguing insights into northern travel for two time periods separated by sixty years. Moreover, it is well illustrated with numerous photographs (most depicting the travels of the Dempster Patrol). This book will be of interest to general northern history enthusiasts and to individuals wishing to gain insights into northern travel in a region that was being transformed by the introduction of modern transportation technologies.

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***Law of the Yukon: A History of the Mounted Police in the Yukon, Revised Edition.* By Helene Dobrowolsky. Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing Co. Ltd., 2013. 248 pp. Illustrations, selected bibliography, map, index.**

Since before the Klondike Gold Rush, the Mounties have had a presence in the Yukon. In *Law of the Yukon*, Helene Dobrowolsky traces the transition of the North-West Mounted Police (NWMP) in the Yukon from a frontier detachment to an entire Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) division revolutionized by modernized transportation and communications technologies. Originally published in 1995—the centennial of the Yukon’s first detachment—Dobrowolsky writes that in this second edition she was “able to add a few more names, correct a few errors and do a few updates” (13). While noting that *Law of the Yukon* is not comprehensive, Dobrowolsky nevertheless provides a thorough narrative of the evolution of the police force in the Yukon, supplemented with insightful biographies of various individuals, and highlighting various themes of northern police work.

*Law of the Yukon’s* chapters are organized both chronologically and thematically. Dobrowolsky introduces the book with a general narrative of the NWMP’s introduction to the Yukon. Following an 1894 “fact-finding mission” (21)—after Anglican Bishop William Carpenter Bompas had requested that a police detachment be established in the Yukon to quell the illegal liquor trade—the Canadian government agreed to establish a detachment at Forty Mile, the primary mining community in the Yukon. The following two chapters naturally examine the challenges faced by the fledgling police force during the rush. As Dobrowolsky states, the gold rush was the “greatest challenge yet” that the police force faced (37). The Mounties filled a myriad of duties during this tumultuous time, ranging from mail carriers to customs officers to the protectors of Canadian sovereignty

in the unresolved issue over the precise location of the Alaskan-Canadian boundary. Additionally, the police worked to alleviate a potential famine situation in Dawson City and sought to improve its sanitary conditions. Due to the need for reinforcements, the Canadian government increased the size of the Mounted Police force and sent the Yukon Field Force—a military unit—north to assist the extant force. Dobrowolsky demonstrates the flexibility of the force in the Yukon during this period as they sought to push prostitution to Dawson’s periphery. While previous historians, such as William Morrison, have discussed the Mounties’ role in protecting Canadian sovereignty during the gold rush,<sup>1</sup> Dobrowolsky provides a multifaceted picture of their operations during this period.

Shifting her attention to the era following the gold rush, Dobrowolsky describes the atrophy of the Yukon’s population and governmental infrastructure, and the Mounties’ adoption of the civil servants’ responsibilities (much to their chagrin). Along with the decline in the territory’s population and civil service between the gold rush and the First World War, there was also a reduction of the police force as excess buildings were sold off and detachments closed.

If the Klondike Gold Rush was a watershed moment for policing in the Yukon, the same might be said of the Second World War and the resultant construction of the Alaska Highway. Highway construction brought an influx of American Army personnel and civilians into the Yukon (especially Whitehorse) and resulted in an associated transition in police work as Whitehorse Mounties were forced to confront “major city” crime (189). Dobrowolsky describes changes in northern transportation technologies that unfolded in conjunction with the construction of the Alaska Highway, and the concomitant changing nature of patrols. For instance, as Teslin became a highway community, truck patrols of the region replaced dogsleds.

Building on the changes brought about during the Second World War, *Law of the Yukon* concludes with an examination of policing in the Yukon in the period following the construction of the Alaska Highway. Dobrowolsky describes the devolution of various responsibilities to the territory, the changing nature of patrols, changing technologies, and the changing nature of crime brought about by the increase in transient workers during the 1960s and 1970s. In order to illustrate the evolution of police work in the latter half of the twentieth century, Dobrowolsky provides interesting anecdotes shedding light on modern police work, such as the capture of a Cold War criminal in Teslin. Interspersed among the chapters providing the

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1. William Morrison, *Showing the Flag: The Mounted Police and Canadian Sovereignty in the North, 1894-1925*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985).

overarching narrative, Dobrowolsky provides chapters highlighting specific themes of police work in the Yukon. The first thematic chapter considers the interactions between the RCMP and the territory's First Nations peoples. It is in this chapter that Dobrowolsky examines some of the more controversial aspects of police work in the Yukon, including the conflicts between Indigenous and British/Canadian systems of justice.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, this chapter discusses the co-operative relationship that existed between the RCMP and First Nations, such as the former's employment of the latter as special constables and guides. The following chapter describes three fascinating case studies providing insights into the unique cases faced by the Mounties.

*Law of the Yukon* proceeds to discuss women's involvement with the police force. This discussion involves an overview of the Mounties' wives' contributions as well as the employment of women as either "woman special" matrons (who were hired to take care of female prisoners) or gold inspectors.

Dobrowolsky also discusses patrolling in the Yukon, including a discussion of important events, such as the ill-fated Lost Patrol and the hunt for the mad trapper Albert Johnson. Additionally, she highlights various functions of patrols including treating smallpox epidemics, collecting customs duties, and providing news to isolated communities. This is followed by a brief discussion of the recreational pursuits of the Mounties while off-duty. The final thematic chapter considers the role of dogs in the Mounted Police. These thematic chapters make a significant contribution to the book by highlighting various elements of policing in the Yukon—such as the important roles of women and First Nations peoples—that might otherwise be obscured in the general narrative.

*Law of the Yukon* is engaging and well-illustrated with photographs. A particularly strong element of the book is the many biographies interspersed throughout its chapters. These biographies effectively illustrate the many and diverse roles that were taken on by the mounted police since 1895 as their duties shifted, expanded, and contracted to meet the Yukon's needs. Dobrowolsky also effectively uses diary excerpts to provide valuable insights into the lives of law enforcement officers. The journal excerpts of John Tinck

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2. By discussing these conflicting justice systems, Dobrowolsky fits into a historiography that includes the works of Shelagh D. Grant, *Arctic Justice: On Trial for Murder, Pond Inlet, 1923*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002) and K.S. Coates and W.R. Morrison, "'To Make These Tribes Understand': The Trial of Alikomiak and Tatamigana," *Arctic* 51.3 (September 1998): 220–230.

and William Kellock McKay provide interesting details of life as a member of the Yukon Field Force and life at a small detachment, respectively.

Dobrowolsky provides glimpses into more controversial elements of police work in the Yukon, such as conflicts between Euro-Canadian and First Nations systems of justice and the Mounties' instructions not to tell First Nations that the government was prepared to recognize their rights to the land. However, this history is downplayed in favour of emphasizing the co-operative relationship between First Nations peoples and the police force.

Finally, a map is provided at the start of the book, which shows where each of the Mounted Police detachments was located in 1903. However, likely due to a formatting error, many of the flags denoting each detachment's respective location are inaccurately placed. Nevertheless, *Law of the Yukon* provides a detailed examination of the evolution of a police force in the Yukon which was fundamental to the development of the territory. With accessible prose and many illustrative photographs, this book should appeal to a broad audience.

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