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*Gamblers and Dreamers: Women, Men, and Community in the Klondike* by Charlene Porsild. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998. xiv, 250 pp., maps, photographs, tables, notes, index, bibliography. ISBN 0-7748-0650-8 (hc). \$70.00 CDN. Reviewed by Brent Slobodin.

*Gamblers and Dreamers* grew out of Charlene Porsild's doctoral dissertation at Carleton University. Making good use of the 1901 national census, previously unavailable to scholars, Porsild has produced the most detailed social history of the Klondike Gold Rush and early history of Dawson City to date. Mixing in but not concentrating on administrators, bureaucrats and other noted personalities of the period, Porsild instead focuses on the largely anonymous men and women who lived, worked and struggled in Dawson City in its earliest years.

Combining census material with memoirs, diaries and stories of the people involved in the Klondike Gold Rush, Porsild has determined that more than 40 nationalities were present in Klondike valley. Certainly there were English and French Canadians, Americans and Britons but there were also Scandinavians, people from the Mediterranean region, Eastern Europeans and adventurers from Asia. The majority of Klondikers were of Canadian or British origin but Americans accounted for 40 percent of the population and the non-North American, non-British component number 20 percent. According to the 1901 census, 85 percent of people living in the Yukon were male, a figure closely matched by the 81:19 ratio of men to women in Dawson City itself.

Census material in hand, Porsild then sets out to describe the society that emerged at the junction of the Klondike and Yukon Rivers. In describing the people, their occupations, their struggles, triumphs and defeats, she is at her best in *Gamblers and Dreamers*. Readers of Yukon history are well versed in the more famous stories of George Carmacks or Skookum Jim, Martha Louise Black and her husband George, or Robert Service and Jack London and even some of the miners who struck it rich, such as Clarence Berry. But who knew of Mabel Moore who followed her husband from Douglas Island, Alaska to the goldfields, cooking, nursing and keeping house while her husband and brother prospected? Who knew the sad tale of Joseph Clearihue, who followed the prospectors from the Stikine and set up a general merchandise store in Dawson in 1900 only to have his store manager cheat him of everything? Wanting "no more of the Klondike," Clearihue sent his last \$30 home to his wife and family only to have the money order he had purchased go down with the ship, *Islander*. These stories of largely anonymous people add depth and variety to the social history of the Klondike and Dawson City. Not all of the close to 40,000 adventurers who came to the Klondike

left a legacy as well known as the more celebrated figures of the era, but Porsild is able to give many of them new life through the recreation of their stories.

But if *Gamblers and Dreamers* is successful as a descriptive history, it is less so as an original work of scholarly writing. The format of her narrative is prosaic. First, she provides a brief overview of the original inhabitants of the Klondike, the Han. Her conclusions are not new, such as the Han were one of last North American aboriginal peoples to experience contact with non-natives or that they participated only in a limited way in the economy of the Klondike. Any standard textbook on the Klondike Gold Rush would say the same things. Moving from the Han to a depiction of the miners and mining in the region, she again concludes with what is largely known: almost all miners were men; the majority of people in the Klondike made a living through some form or combination of forms of semi- or unskilled labour; labour scarcity and high wages were offset by a high cost of living and seasonal employment. Even the claim to challenging a prevailing stereotype by showing that a great number of men worked for wages rather than operating a claim of their own seems overplayed. Ken Coates and other historians have already demonstrated that the profitable claims were staked quickly and that few were left for the thousands who arrived in 1898, leaving them to fend for themselves with wage labour in a variety of ways. Whether dealing with the professional and business sectors of Dawson City or social work and religious life in the Klondike, Porsild's conclusions generally ring familiar.

Perhaps the main flaw in the book is that in challenging perceived popular myths about the Klondike, the author has not fully grasped the fact that the very myths she is challenging have long been put to bed by scholars. Who really accepts anymore, for example, that "[t]he popular image of the Klondike is a frontier of white, male adventurers who overcame great physical and geographical obstacles in their quest for gold?" The tales of aboriginal people capitalizing "on any opportunity to soak newcomers with exorbitant freighting and boat building-rates," Mounties being sent to establish law and order and protect the Yukon from the Yankee mob, and Dawson City being civilized only after 1900 with the arrival of white, middle class women have not washed with any historian, scholarly or popular, for some time. Porsild would have a more plausible case if she used as evidence more than a recent television "Heritage Moment" and implicit nods to Hollywood images. If these are popular myths that persist, then who or what is contributing to their persistence? Is this what is taught in classrooms? Is the media still portraying the Klondike this way? Are these stereotypes what were celebrated recently during the 100th Anniversary of the Klondike Gold Rush and Yukon Territory? While referring to the scholarly work of anthropologists and historians such as Julie Cruikshank, Ken Coates and Frances Backhouse, she clearly underestimates the influence of their scholarly work over the years in changing received opinion about the Klondike.

Nevertheless, a book does not have to be startlingly original in its interpretation to be a good one. Porsild has taken a skeleton of a story and put badly needed flesh on it. Her work succeeds because of the depth she has added to the story with her use of the 1901 census and the memoirs, diaries and reminiscences she has woven in to the narrative. The tables on the ethnic origin of Klondike people, on their occupations, genders, religious affiliations and migratory patterns are useful to any student of the Klondike. *Gamblers and Dreamers* is a welcome addition to the historiography of the Klondike and will prove a useful resource to instructors and students alike.

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*Sustainable Development in the North: Local Initiatives vs. Megaprojects* edited by Gérard Duhaime, Rasmus Ole Rasmussen and Robert Comtois. Circumpolar Arctic Social Sciences Ph.D. Network, Proceedings of the Second Conference. Québec: GETIC/ Université Laval, 1998. 393pp. ISBN: 2-921438-26-7. Reviewed by Ken de la Barre.

The fundamental assumptions of this book are that (1) Arctic communities are witnessing major cultural, political, economic and environmental changes; (2) Arctic populations are experiencing the impacts of large industries (e.g., diamond mines in the Northwest Territories, hydro-electric projects in Iceland, and tourism almost everywhere); and (3) there is an increasing degree of social policy and income transfers. And all of this is happening within the context of a "growing national and international independency." The editors conclude these changes require new forms of co-operation and integration of research.

This book is a product of the Circumpolar Arctic Social Sciences Ph.D. Network, which was established in 1995-96. The Network takes an interdisciplinary approach to research on "the cultural, political and economic basis for community development, and the resources required for locally based ways of life."

One innovative way the Network integrates its research is to have small groups of Ph. D. students to meet once or twice a year in an Arctic community and have the students present papers based on their research and on the progress of their graduate studies. The first of these "travel courses" was held in Greenland in 1996. The second was held in Quebec in October, 1997 with participants from Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Faeroe Islands, Greenland, Canada and the USA.

This book brings together the main results of the 1997 meeting. Nineteen lectures and dissertations are included, given by the supervising professors and students, as well as seven contributions from local resource people. In addition, there are five abstracts of