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Sleeping Island: A Journey To The Edge Of The Barrens (Second Edition)



Synopsis

In an age when bush planes and outboard motors were opening up previously inaccessible regions of the Canadian North, Prentice G. Downes, a graduate of Harvard who worked as a schoolteacher just outside Boston, chose to travel alone by canoe to explore the Great Barren Lands. *Sleeping Island* is the sensitively written and moving account of one of his trips, a journey made in 1939 to remote, and at that time unmapped, Nueltin Lake. Downes records a North that was soon to be no more, a landscape and communities that had experienced little contact with European settlers. Downes describes the excitement of wilderness canoe travel, the delights of discovering the land, and his deep feeling for the people he met along the way. His respect for the First Nations and their ways of life, as well as his love of their land, shine through this richly descriptive work.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Prentice G. "Spike" Downes (1909–1959) was an American school teacher and author, who travelled by canoe to explore the Great Barren Lands and learn the ways of the Cree and Dene people. Downes's journals record a disappearing people, and a landscape unknown to all but the Canadian natives at that time. His daughter Annie Downes Catterson said of him that he traveled a great distance "in order to learn the things of long ago."

A beautiful account of discovery in "The North" decades ago, when Downes traveled where few had ventured and observed early interactions between Indians and white outposts. He was a keen observer and writer; although some of his comments about the "natives" at that time may sound

dated, he viewed them with sympathy and appreciation. It's a great record of adventure that is hardly possible to imagine, or accomplish, today.

Heron Dance Press has published so many special books that it's very possible you will want them all. If you are interested in a well-written and thoughtful first-hand factual account of a canoe trip taken in 1939 to a remote part of Canada that was rarely visited or recorded and no longer exists, this is a book you'll thoroughly enjoy.

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