

book reviews

MY NAME IS MASAK: by Alice French; Publisher: Pequis Publishers Limited, Winnipeg, Man., Pp. 110, Illus. Index \$9.00.

Masak was born on Baillie Island, N.W.T., an island in the Beaufort Sea. As a little girl she did the things any other Eskimo child did, with the possible exception that her father taught her English, a knowledge which would stand her in good stead as fate was later to decree.

When Masak was seven, her mother contracted tuberculosis and Masak and her brother were placed in a Residential School in Aklavik. Suddenly she was one of a crowd, living by rules completely foreign to a little Eskimo girl, rules made by white people for white people, complete with all the traditions of a white society. *My Name Is Masak* tells that story.

The author has chosen to write of her life as a little girl rather than as an adult, and is thus able to avoid the analysing question — “why?” She does not complain about the system — she merely tells it as it was. However, any reader with eyes to see will surely ask that very question — “Why?”

My Name Is Masak is a beautiful, perhaps even a poignant story. No one will close the book, without having a clear understanding of the meaning of the term — “culture shock.”

It is little wonder northern natives are digging in against the too-rapid onrush of what we call civilization. This book will make reflective readers realize why they are so concerned. JCR.

OUTDOORS CANADA: A unique and practical guide to our wilderness and wildlife, published by The Reader's Digest Association (Canada Ltd., 215 Redfern Ave., Montreal, Que., in conjunction with the Canadian Automobile Association, 150 Gloucester Ave., Ottawa, Ont., January, 1977, Douglas R. Long — Editor, Pp. 384, size 9 x 12 inches; over 1000 photos, maps, illustrations and charts; Price \$24.95.

In the Summer, 1976, issue of the *Quarterly*, we published a review of *Scenic Wonders of*

Canada, a book also published jointly by Reader's Digest and the Canadian Automobile Association. It is an excellent book, and to say *Outdoors Canada* is an equal and complimentary edition is also to say it is excellent.

The book is broken into sections which deal with specific topics. For instance, the second section describes more than 300 Canadian mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, insects and shellfish.

The third section deals with Canadian flora, the fourth with understanding weather, the fifth, the outdoors. Another section deals with outdoor cooking, and yet another with what I feel is very interesting — how to enjoy the outdoors. It touches on many outdoor activities such as swimming, boating, canoeing, fishing, hiking, stargazing, photography, and so on — something for almost everyone. Furthermore, each one of these is broken down into do's and don'ts, nice little tips which could well save one's life!

The last section is entitled — Outdoors: Where It Is. It deals with areas right across Canada where we might find hiking trails, canoe routes, points of interest, etc. and gives uncluttered but clear maps of where one might find areas to enjoy the outdoors. When one considers the migration from the “asphalt jungles” to the country every weekend, a book such as *Outdoors Canada* becomes all the more essential.

Perhaps many hints in this book might seem “old hat” to a seasoned veteran, but as Herman Smith-Johannsen says in his forward, “The most vulnerable person in the wilderness is one who thinks he knows it all.” Very true — nature can be, and often is, very unforgiving to the unacquainted and unprepared. This book assists even the most fledgling novice to become acquainted and prepared.

One other thought permeates the book — to enjoy yet protect our wilderness, to live in harmony with it lest we mar it forever.

No doubt, another A+ for the writers, editors, artists and all the others who made this a great book. JCR.