

(Free) Alaska: Images of the Country

Alaska: Images of the Country

John McPhee

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John McPhee : Alaska: Images of the Country before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Alaska: Images of the Country:

29 of 29 people found the following review helpful. Disturbing ImagesBy Conrad J. ObregonGalen Rowell was one of the great outdoor photographers and most of his books are full of spectacular pictures of mountain scenery. But if you are expecting a normal picture book about Alaska, this isn't it. Instead this is a look at a place that is full of ambiguity.The book is structured around John McPhee's book "Coming into the Country". In that book McPhee gives an insightful description of Alaska as a place, and its inhabitants. The Alaskans seem torn between preserving the wilderness and developing it and the extracts contained in this volume capture that spirit. For example, McPhee provides admiring character studies of a number of people who came to Alaska because they just didn't fit in back in the lower 48 states. Even his descriptions of travels in the wilderness have an overlay of the politics of the state, where the federal government, which once owned most of the land, is distrusted by most citizens.Rowell decided that he wanted to take McPhee's writing and illustrate it with his own pictures. The preface makes clear that McPhee didn't offer a lot of cooperation. In fact he warned Rowell not to overprint his verbal pictures with Rowell's. The text selection was made by Rowell and the pictures included are not directly related to the words but have a close connection to their spirit.As I noted, this is not any ordinary Rowell book (if there is such a thing). There are far more pictures of human beings and their artifacts than one usually finds in such a book, and I sometimes felt that the pictures were gritty and dark. At first I thought that this was a shortcoming of the photographs but then I realized that

Rowell had specifically selected these pictures because he believed that they reflected the spirit of McPhee's words. Oh, there are some grand landscapes like a picture of snow-covered Mount McKinley across isolated Nugget Pond, but there is also a picture of the same snow-covered peak taken across a dark, intruding asphalt highway into the wilderness. The final pages capture the essence of this book. McPhee describes the role of the 55 gallon steel drum in the Alaskan landscape, and tells how his view has gone from considering them ugly to finding them almost blooming. Opposite these words Rowell has placed a picture of a long line of rusty drums curving sinuously out of the frame into the Arctic Ocean. This book is more than 20 years old and the McPhee book almost 40 years old. Alaska may have changed since then, although everything I've read about it recently makes me believe that the same forces are still at work out on this frontier. But for a person interested in Alaska this book provides a feeling for the place and its people that has the ring of authenticity. If you want to see Alaska as a work of art, then I would recommend Art Wolfe's recent book of photographs "Alaska". But if you want to understand how a bright place can still have a dark soul, "Images of the Country" is a good place to start. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Stunning Photography By Sue Scott I became a fan of Galen Rowell's photography after I read his wife's wonderful book, Flying South (by Barbara Cushman Rowell). Beautiful images of a beautiful country that is perhaps too brief and narrow in its selection of subjects. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. NICE PICTURES By chuck8700 This is a good collection of Alaska images. Well presented. Makes a nice coffee table reader for guests to our house.

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From the Inside Flap First published in 1981 and now available in this distinctive edition, a compelling portrait of modern Alaska pairs excerpts from John McPhee's classic "Coming into the Country" with photojournalist Galen Rowell's breathtaking images of the lands and peo About the Author Galen Rowell (1940-2002) was one of the world's most celebrated nature photographers. His many books include Bay Area Wild, Mountain Light, My Tibet (with H.H. The Dalai Lama), and Galen Rowell's Vision. He lives in Bishop, California. John McPhee is the best-selling author of more than twenty books, including Basin and Range and Giving Good Weight. He lives in Princeton, New Jersey.