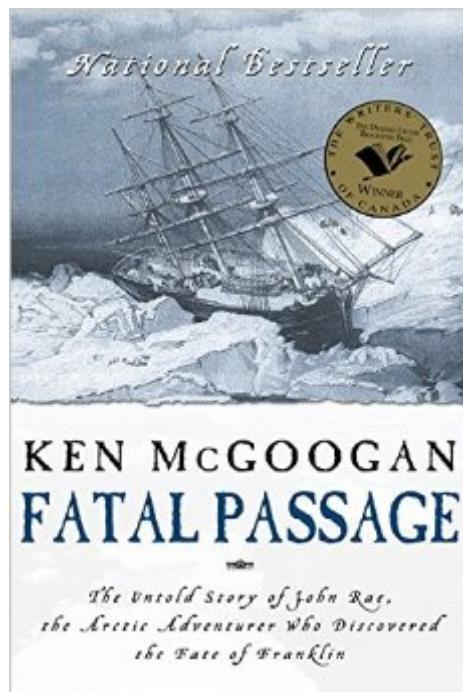


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Fatal Passage Tpb



Synopsis

The truth is that John Rae solved the two great mysteries of nineteenth-century Arctic exploration: during a single expedition in 1854, he discovered both the fate of the Franklin expedition and the only Northwest Passage navigable by the ships of that time — the fatal passage explorers had been seeking for centuries. — from Fatal Passage Not long after he began reading the handwritten, 820-page diary of Scottish explorer John Rae, Ken McGoogan realized that here was an astonishing story, hidden from the world for almost 150 years. McGoogan, who was originally conducting research for a novel, recognized the injustice committed against Rae. He was determined to restore the adventurer's rightful place in history as the man who discovered not only the grisly truth about the lost Franklin expedition, but also the final link in the elusive Northwest Passage. Fatal Passage is McGoogan's completely absorbing account of John Rae's incredible accomplishments and his undeserved and wholesale discreditation at the hands of polite Victorian society. After sifting through thousands of pages of research, maps and charts, and traveling to England, Scotland and the Arctic to visit the places Rae knew, McGoogan has produced a book that reads like a fast-paced novel — a smooth synthesis of adventure story, travelogue and historical biography. Fatal Passage is a richly detailed portrait of a time when the ambitions of the Empire knew no bounds. John Rae was an adventurous young medical doctor from Orkney who signed on with the Hudson's Bay Company in 1833. He lived in the Canadian wilds for more than two decades, becoming legendary as a hunter and snowshoer, before he turned to exploration. Famous for what was then a unique attitude — a willingness to learn from and use the knowledge and skills of aboriginal peoples — Rae became the first European to survive an Arctic winter while living solely off the land. One of dozens of explorers and naval men commissioned by the British Admiralty to find out what became of Sir John Franklin and his two ships, Rae returned from the Arctic to report that the most glorious expedition ever launched had ended with no survivors — and worse, that it had degenerated into cannibalism. Unwilling to accept that verdict, Victorian England not only ostracized Rae, but ignored his achievements, and credited Franklin with the discovery of the Passage. Fatal Passage is Ken McGoogan's brilliant vindication of John Rae's life and rightful place in history, a book for armchair adventurers, Arctic enthusiasts, lovers of Canadian history, and all those who revel in a story of physical courage and moral integrity. Read an opinion piece by Ken McGoogan: <http://www.edmontonjournal.com/opinion1/stories/010415/5013219.html>

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Customer Reviews

Just a quick review ... this was a wonderful book. It really should be essential reading in Canadian schools as it was well researched & so well written that you just can't stop! So much has been written about the North West Passage & who 'discovered' it ... but, this gives a much clearer picture. Read the book & you'll never regret it!

Read this book some time ago on my e reader, thoroughly enjoyed it and as I read the book I felt I was actually travelling along with the expedition. Cannot believe how hard it was for explorers especially travelling through the freezing cold and with no modern conveniences that we have today. Should really rate as five.

Still reading it. But so far is been spot on. I like history and been reading more and more. Being Canadian I like the subject matter and Ken keeps it moving along. Not a slog like some books I have read.

One has to marvel at how Dr John Rae walked, snowshoes , whatever - all those miles ! Thousands upon thousands ! For sure, he must have been a very efficient walker, easy on the body, just the right strides, just the right metabolism. And...just the right footwear. Imagine, Dr. Rae going out in the Canadian wilderness, and no shoe store around- the footwear must have been of the utmost top quality. Wish I could find a pair like that !

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