



FIRST

STORIES OF THE 1929

NATIONS,

FRANKLIN MOTOR EXPEDITION

MUSEUMS,

TO THE CANADIAN PRAIRIES

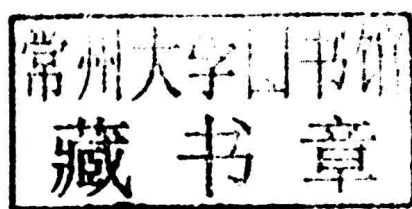
NARRATIONS

ALISON K. BROWN

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First Nations, Museums, Narrations

Stories of the 1929 Franklin Motor
Expedition to the Canadian Prairies



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First Nations, Museums, Narrations

*To Joy Brown, who encouraged me to write this book,
and in memory of Tom Brown and Iain Brown*

Abbreviations

AMNH	American Museum of Natural History
CF	Cadzow Family
CMC	Canadian Museum of Civilization
DIA	Department of Indian Affairs
GAI	Glenbow-Alberta Institute
LAC	Library and Archives Canada
MAA	Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge
MAI	Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation
NMAI	National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution
PRM	Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford
SAB	Saskatchewan Archives Board
UCCA	United Church of Canada Archives

A Note on Terminology

THE NAMES USED to refer to the Aboriginal peoples of what is now Canada have undergone changes and shifts throughout history. In 1929, the time of the Franklin Motor Expedition that is the focus of this book, "Indian" was the most commonly used descriptive term for indigenous people. It is still used in legislation, such as the Indian Act. Many people now prefer the collective term "First Nations," which includes status and non-status persons and is currently applied to federally recognized bands. Given that the narrative of this book moves between past and present, I have chosen to use "First Nations" throughout, unless I am quoting. At times I use the more inclusive "Aboriginal," which encompasses all three groups of original peoples and their descendants recognized in the Canadian constitution: Indians (First Nations), Métis, and Inuit. I also use the nations' own names for themselves, wherever possible, though they may differ from those with which the expedition team was familiar. For example, Bungay, Saulteaux, and Plains or western Ojibwe were all used historically to refer to Anishinaabe peoples who moved to the Plains region of Western Canada. The autonym "Anishinaabe" is now relatively common in spoken and written English, whereas the equivalent Cree and Blackfoot autonyms, *nehiyaw* and *Niitsitapi*, are used less frequently. It is for this reason that I have chosen to use the collective names "Cree" and "Blackfoot" in this book, rather than "*nehiyaw*" and "*Niitsitapi*." Naming is a political act, and I appreciate that my decisions on this matter raise problems of historical accuracy, to which some readers may object.

There are no adequate English translations of the indigenous words for the materials that museums call “objects” or “artifacts.” According to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP 1996, 592), “In many cases, Aboriginal people consider the term ‘artefact,’ with its connotations of dusty relics tagged and catalogued, inappropriate. Sacred objects such as medicine bundles and totems still speak to the people; they are still used in traditional ceremonies.” Some First Nations colleagues prefer “holy things,” which comes from their own language; others are uncomfortable with the words “object” or “artifact” but, given the need to find a suitable English term, prefer the latter. Museums often use the generic “sacred objects,” “ceremonial artifacts,” or “sacred-ceremonial artifacts,” which are used in repatriation legislation and in guidelines for the care of such materials. Though I acknowledge the difficulties with all these terms, I have chosen to use “ceremonial artifacts” in this book.

I also acknowledge that “community” is a contested and complex term that, if applied uncritically, suggests a bounded group rather than many shifting relationships. I use it as imperfect shorthand with the understanding that it encompasses a range of social relationships, rather than a unified, cohesive group. At the same time, I appreciate that it is used by many people of indigenous descent, who find it a helpful way to identify collective relationships, both historically and in the present day. Likewise, “mainstream society” is problematic and equally homogenizing. It generally refers to Eurocentric values and assumptions that, at the time of the Franklin Motor Expedition, characterized much of the policy decisions and institutional structures that affected the interactions of Aboriginal peoples with the state. The term is less useful today, given that Canada is a much more culturally diverse nation than it was in 1929, but as with “community,” since no suitable alternative exists, I have reluctantly chosen to use it.

Finally, attempts to standardize style and format in a publication that uses multiple First Nations languages can inadvertently gloss over the cultural complexities embedded within the words themselves, and the variant spellings. First Nations linguists continue to debate how best to represent their languages on the page. This book uses Plains Cree, Ojibwe, and Blackfoot words throughout. I have followed the guidance of colleagues who speak and write these languages fluently, and who frequently publish in their respective language. Basing my approach on their advice, I have used the following conventions in this book: all Plains Cree words are in

lower case and in italics; all Blackfoot words are in italics and use upper case for the first letter of proper nouns; Ojibwe words also use upper case for the first letter of proper nouns but are not italicized.

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I have tried, where possible, to use the names by which First Nations individuals are known in their own communities and have been helped in this matter by several colleagues. Assistance with the editing and interpretation of Cree names was provided by Arok Wolvengrey and Doreen Oakes of the Indian Languages Programs at First Nations University of Canada

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