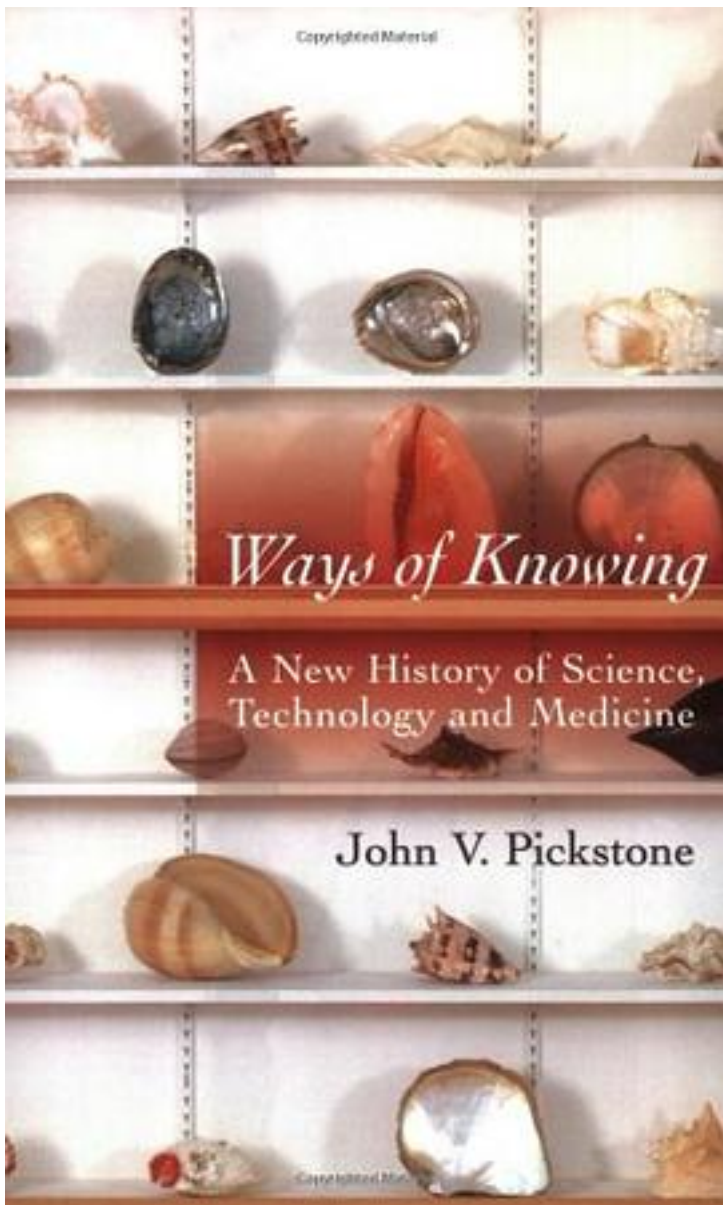


Ways of Knowing



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This innovative study reveals the creative world of a Native community. Once seminomadic hunters and gatherers who traveled by horse wagon, canoe, and dog sled, the Dene Tha of northern Canada today live in government-built homes in the settlement of Chateh. Their lives are a distinct blend of old and new, in which traditional forms of social control, healing, and praying entwine with services supplied by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, a nursing station, and a Roman Catholic church. Many older cultural beliefs and practices remain: ghosts linger, reincarnating and sometimes causing deaths; past and future are interpreted through the Prophet Dance; "animal helpers" become lifelong companions and sources of power; and personal visions and experiences are considered the roots of true knowledge. Why and how are such striking beliefs and practices still vital to the Dene Tha? Drawing on extensive fieldwork at Chateh, anthropologist Jean-Guy Goulet delineates the interconnections between the strands of meaning and experience with which the Dene Tha constitute and creatively engage their world. Goulet's insights into the Dene Tha's ways of knowing were gained through directly experiencing their lifeway rather than through formal instruction. This experiential perspective makes his study especially illuminating, providing an intimate glimpse of a remarkable and enduring Native community. Jean-Guy A. Goulet is the director of the Research Centre at Saint Paul University, Ottawa, Ontario. He is coeditor of *Being Changed by Cross-Cultural Encounters: The Anthropology of Extraordinary Experience*.

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