
For those conducting historic and ethnographic, as well as archaeological, research in Alaska, early records, journals, and other archival materials are of critical importance. Although valuable information can be found in the journals of Russian-American Company personnel, until recently a thorough knowledge of Russian was essential for use to be made of it. Fortunately, through the work of translation and editing done by a number of researchers—particularly James VanStone and David Kraus, whose work is the subject of this review, and Richard A. Pierce—these once obscure resources are becoming readily available in English.

The Russian-American Company initiated several expeditions to the Bering Sea region, for political as well as economic purposes. In north Alaska they faced competition from British expeditions in attempting to discover a northwest passage. In 1826, Sir John Franklin had travelled west as far as Return Reef on the north Alaskan coast of the Arctic Ocean, while Thomas Elson, of Beechey's ship, moved north along the coast from Kotzebue to as far east as Point Barrow. A year before Kashevarov's expedition, Thomas Simpson completed the exploration of the last 200 miles of coast between Return Reef and Point Barrow. In spite of the fact that it covered the same ground, Kashevarov's expedition was especially important because of the much greater amount of geographic and ethnographic information its members recorded.

It had been realized that the use of large ships to survey and explore the coast of Alaska north of the seventieth parallel (near Icy Cape) was virtually impossible because of the presence of many islands and the difficulty of distinguishing between straits and inlets (pp. 5-6). The members of Kashevarov's well-organized expedition travelled with their ample provisions in five 3-hatched baidarki (kayaks) and one 12-oar baidara. It was therefore possible for them to move close to the shore and thus gather accurate, detailed information. The presence of a speaker of Inupik facilitated clear communication with the local people and the recording of detailed ethnographic data.

The information Kashevarov obtained on settlement patterns is especially useful; he located definitely thirteen permanent and seasonal settlements and tentatively located another four. Of equal significance is the documentation of the name of each Eskimo group encountered, the number of persons in it, and a comment on the language. If the group was not in its permanent settlement, he noted the reason; many small groups were detachments from larger settlements engaged in hunting caribou. The comments Kashevarov made on the degree of hostility or cordiality shown by each group toward its neighbours provide one of the earliest sources of information on inter-societal relationships.

In an article he wrote in 1846, which appears in translation in the appendix, Kashevarov provided a more general overview of north Alaskan Eskimos and drew some comparisons between them and southern Eskimos. Using an early "cultural ecological" approach, he attempted to establish correlations between kinds of societies and the natural environments, suggesting for example that ecological reasons existed for differences noted between summer and winter house types. Kashevarov discussed plants and animals in relation to the seasonal round of activities of the people. He described various subsistence techniques, such as the hunting of caribou, birds and seals, and the clothing, personal adornments, armour, weapons, boats and utensils. He also included some data on social organization. In total Kashevarov provided an early ecologically-oriented work of ethnography, containing population figures and important information on the settlement patterns of the north Alaskan Eskimos before they had had extensive contact with Europeans. In so doing he established an important basis for later studies.

VanStone's preface and introduction, as well as his notes concerning various points in the text itself, are critical for an understanding of the significance of Kashevarov's writings. They add considerably to the value of the present publication. It would have been useful if translations had been provided of the Russian sources listed in the bibliography; those not conversant with that language could then have determined whether it would be useful to their research to have a particular source translated.

An important, but not emphasized, point is that Kashevarov was a Creole, not a Russian. The Creole children of Russian hunters and native women were sometimes taken to be educated in Russia and afterwards sent back to Alaska. The hope was that, as a result, the Russian-American Company could ultimately rely on the Creole population to main-
tain the Alaskan colony and thereby obviate the necessity of bringing in employees and settlers from Russia. While this goal was not entirely realized, a number of Creoles did make major contributions to their native country. Kashevarov was one of them.

Several years ago VanStone and Kraus translated and edited V.S. Khromchenko's *Coastal Explorations in Southwestern Alaska, 1822* (Fieldiana: Anthropology, vol. 64). The present volume complements that work. Together, they provide some of the earliest information on Eskimo societies along the Bering Sea, and are therefore of considerable value for anyone working on the historic and late-prehistoric periods of Alaska.

Joan B. Townsend

WE DON'T LIVE IN SNOW HOUSES NOW: REFLECTIONS OF ARCTIC BAY. INTERVIEWS BY RHODA INNUKSUK AND SUSAN COWAN. TRANSLATED BY RHODA INNUKSUK, MAUDIE QITSUALIK AND LUCI MARQUAND. EDITED BY SUSAN COWAN. Ottawa: Canadian Arctic Producers Limited, 1976. 194 pages, illus., maps. $11.95.

This is a fascinating history of the transformation of the High Arctic as experienced by the Inuit artists of Arctic Bay and its vicinity. It consists of transcripts of interviews conducted by Rhoda Innuksuk and Susan Cowan and, in the words of the latter, the people speak “about themselves, about the community, about life as it was in the past, about the process of change they have undergone, about art and its place in their lives, about some of the issues and problems that are of concern to them now and in the future.” The original statements are given, as well as English translations in an easy-flowing style.

The first part introduces the Tuniit who, according to current opinion, were identified with the Dorset culture, which thrived from 1000 B.C. to 1300 A.D., and were displaced by the Inuit who were a smaller, but must have been a harder, race. The remains of the Tuniit's stone houses and some of their carvings are extant.

Customs before the coming of the missionaries and the changes after "God" displaced the "devil" are described. Stories, some quite exciting, are told of the power of the shamans.

The last of the eight chapters deal with the present: the role of the cooperatives; the advantages and disadvantages of snowmobiles; the inadequacies of "matchbox" houses built by the government; and, of course, the effects of industrial development.

Although now there is no fear of starvation as there once was, and many other conditions have improved, the reader feels in parts of the book a hankering after the old days. For instance, one artist reminisces: "I'm not against anything that has been done; but it seems it was such a short time ago that we were still living in our own way, and today when you look around it is all dying out. It's very sad."

Numerous excellent photographs illustrate the text and depict a splendid-looking people. Maps and footnotes give additional useful information.

It is encouraging to note that the present volume is only the first of a series that Canadian Arctic Producers Limited is planning, because there is a great need for educational material of this delightful kind. This need is recognized by the Inuit artists themselves, one of whom said in an interview: "I would like the next people who write books about us to understand us better before they write them."

One criticism: the book deserves a wide circulation and therefore merits a much sturdier binding.

Anna P.B. Monson

Books Received


