The title of this book is misleading. True, it is concerned with Alaska, but the emphasis is on the Arctic; contemporary problems of exploration and exploitation there, primarily related to oil; and the Eskimo, his heritage, and how his life has been changed by past and present contact with the white man.

There is mini-coverage of the rest of the state and its history. But no matter—the quality of the writing more than makes up for the misconceptions that may occur from the printing on the dust-jacket and the title page.

The book is short and compact, with 152 pages of text and a 5-page index. It is well illustrated with 95 pictures, all in black and white, and is organized into seven chapters.

It is introduced with a summation of interest to most people, namely the discovery of oil at Prudhoe Bay, which was preceded with less fanfare by strikes in the area of the Cook Inlet—Kenai Peninsula in 1957. In view of the discussions that follow concerning the social, economic, educational, and public health problems of the native, the author would have done well to have extended this subject to include information on the nearby Tyonek Indians. By consenting to allow the federal government to lease their land to oil interests, the tribe received back much money. Blessed with good financial advice and administration, they were not only able to rebuild their village and finally gain access to the "good life", but also to use this new monetary base to form Braund, Inc., a busy construction company, and to invest their money in other enterprises, including ownership of two large office complexes in the heart of Anchorage. This is of particular significance in view of recent happenings throughout the state, and their brothers elsewhere would do well to emulate them when the bonanza from the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and oil royalties finally becomes a reality.

A good and accurate account of the legal battles that have resulted from the proposed pipeline follows—battles which at this date seem to have been resolved by an Act of
Congress, so that construction will probably begin in the near future. The author is as objective and sympathetic to the environmentalists and conservationists as she is to the oil cartels. She emphasizes some of the direct and indirect problems that will be caused by permafrost, and why it has to be considered a major aspect of the planning and operation of the pipeline. She is also cognizant of the long-range effects that this enterprise will have on the economy of the state, which since its purchase in 1867 has been through many boom-to-bust eras which have included a number of gold rushes, the DEW Line, and now a trans-Alaska pipeline.

In chapter 2 is considered briefly the genesis of the state from a territory, and its strategic position as related to defence, with emphasis on the DEW Line and White Alice Line. Additional passages are concerned with native populations and their lack of innate immunity to tuberculosis. The next chapter is a logical extension; however, the balance is one-sided, with approximately 6 pages devoted to the Indian and about 34 to the Eskimo. Included are social and political changes brought about by contact with white people, the renaissance of native arts and crafts, and — above the Arctic Circle — housing, whaling, public health, and social practices as related to the environment.

In chapter 4 there is something of a digression. The climatology of the state and its means of transportation are discussed very briefly with emphasis on the aeroplane, the Alaska Railroad, the Marine Highway, and experimental transport systems such as the Rolligan and hovercraft. Economic transitions from fishing, mining and Arctic whaling in the past to lumbering, tourism, and petroleum in the present are also considered.

Pre-territorial history is presented next, including discovery and colonization by the Russian American Company and its impact on the Indians, and a mini-geographical and historical account of Sitka (then and now) and Juneau — how it was founded, and the reason for its becoming, and remaining, the modern capital, first of the territory and now the state.

Chapter 6 is devoted to islands and their economy: the Diomedes and Pribilofs — sealing; Nunivak — reindeer and musk-ox husbandry; Kodiak — shrimp fishing; and the Aleutians, which have no significant economic base.

The final chapter starts with a consideration of the larger metropolitan areas of Fairbanks and Anchorage — the former with the nearby University of Alaska, and the latter near the largest agricultural area of the state, the Matanuska Valley; it then proceeds to cover the inhabitants of Point Hope and Barrow in the North, in the latter case dealing not only with the town itself but also the research activities that are taking place at a short distance to its north at the U.S. Navy's scientific laboratory.

The book contains a few statements or passages that are misleading. For example, Max Brewer was not the first director of the facility, now known as the Naval Arctic Research Laboratory at Barrow, but was there at the time of a change of name (page 165); he was preceded by five others. The Arctic Health Research Center is no longer in Anchorage, but located on the campus of the University of Alaska at College (page 142). Mention is also made of a mystery vehicle with giant rubber-tired wheels that was used during the DEW Line construction for hauling large quantities of supplies over the frozen tundra (page 87). As a matter of fact, there was little activity inland during that period, since all of the stations were on the coast. Freightling, primarily out of Barrow, to stations from Cape Beaufort to Barter Island, was a significant aspect of construction, but it was done with "cat trains" which travelled over the sea ice, and the mainstay of this operation was the familiar "D-8 cat" (caterpillar tractor) pulling a series of either Michler or Panachek sleds loaded with supplies or wanigans (sheds on sled-runners) used for sleeping, eating in, and train maintenance. The ice-island, ARLIS II, was abandoned in May 1965 (p. 164-5), and Fletcher's Ice Island T-3 is now the mainstay for year-round oceanographic research. All of these points are minor, however, and do not detract significantly from the overall quality of the text.

Although the author is not a native Alaskan, she makes frequent trips to the state, has a large number of knowledgeable contacts (whom she has acknowledged) and has used a variety of reference material (though has provided no bibliography) to accurately document most of her presentation.

This book will probably have limited appeal to the serious scholar; it will serve, however, as an excellent and quick work of reference for those who have never been, or who are contemplating going, to Alaska to give them some insight into what to expect, as well as some of the contemporary problems confronting the state. Because of its length as well as its contents, it will also be of value as a supplementary geography and history text for both elementary and high school students.

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