

years ago” (p. 539). He thus points to the stage for the concluding scenario, mapping out a tight sequence of events for eastern Beringia. The earliest sites of 11 000–11 500 years ago are reclassified as nonmicroblade sites (of microblade users) instead of pre-microblade sites. After having spread to the limit of eastern Beringia, some people exited southward through the Mackenzie valley. Possibly their exodus was part of a chain reaction to environmental distress—the deterioration of the steppe biome. Their arrival at the south end of the corridor accounts for the origin of Clovis people and culture. To explain the actual lack of evidence from the corridor of this migration, West proposes that the migration was accomplished very rapidly and by one small group.

Unlike the case with the substantive data for Western and Eastern Beringia, evidence for the migration through the corridor is “thin soup.” There are assemblages in the region with microblade cores, but those well placed on corridor terrain seem to be late, and earlier ones from south of the corridor do not clearly contain Denali-type cores. Altogether, consideration of the scattered early evidence from the Mackenzie valley, Alberta, and British Columbia does not as yet have decisive bearing on West’s hypothesis. I question, though, why a tool tradition adapted to the use of microblades was discarded during the rapid passage southward, and why northern lanceolate points of Clovisian age bear so little resemblance to Clovis points.

Back in the North, the Early Beringian tradition disappeared about 9000 years ago, replaced by the Late Beringian tradition. As far as *American Beginnings* is concerned, the scene had been played out by that time.

Analysts working with northeast Asian and northwest North American artifact assemblages will find an essential tool in the compendium of data that is *American Beginnings*. Those working with the writing of prehistory will discover an essential awareness of events in the North, though most of that information also can be found scattered in other publications. Those concerned with the broader picture should find West’s conclusions stimulating, though for many that may lead to rebuttal. It is such challenges, though, that stimulate advances in research.

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WHO LIVED IN THIS HOUSE? A STUDY OF KOYUKUK RIVER SEMISUBTERRANEAN HOUSES. By A. McFADYEN CLARK. Hull, Quebec: Canadian Museum of Civilization Mercury Series, Archaeological Survey of Canada, Paper No. 153. xviii + 261 p. b&w illus., bib. Softbound. Cdn\$24.95.

This book presents the results of research that began in the early 1960s as the Koyukuk River Culture History Project (1961–72). It describes the excavation and analysis of several mid-to-late 19th-century semisubterranean houses in three winter villages in an Athapaskan/Iñupiat “interface” region in northwestern Alaska, then attempts to identify which cultural group or individual family may have lived in each of them. The author makes use of archaeological, ethnohistoric, and oral history information to achieve her objectives; she refers to this approach as “ethnoarchaeologic.”

After a fairly standard summary of the environmental context, the discussion begins in chapter 2 with the cultural framework. The latter includes a very short piece on prehistory, a more comprehensive evaluation of the available historical data, followed by a still more substantial summary of late 19th-early 20th century history and traditional aboriginal culture. The latter is illustrated with ten full-page maps that display an average annual cycle, broken down by specific activities and fairly fine divisions of the year. These maps depict very effectively the possible temporal and spatial configurations of land use in the region.

Chapter 3 begins with descriptions of the major villages that were excavated. These include the Lake Creek, Kayak, and Okak sites, all of which were shown to the author by village elders. Local residents could not recall any details about the Kayak site until excavation had begun to produce artifacts that triggered latent memories about who may have lived in the village. The Okak site, which was discovered by accident, was completely unknown, despite having artifacts that dated it to the second half of the 19th century.

This absence of any recall for something that, in archaeological terms, seems so recent is intriguing, particularly in this era that recognizes the benefits of traditional knowledge to many facets of archaeological enquiry. I encountered a similar situation in the Old Crow region on three separate occasions. The most striking was during a survey of a small creek on Old Crow Flats, about 50 km by air northwest of the town. A Vuntut Gwitchin elder who accompanied our party was adamant that an obvious winter house was “not one of theirs.” This was in spite of the fact that the dwelling was in excellent condition, with most structural remains intact, and a steel axe with homemade handle was in place within the house; the house appeared to date to the early 20th century. The elder consulted with even older residents of the village, but no one could remember the campsite. A possible explanation is that the Old Crow house was indeed foreign, having been used by Inuvialuit trappers who frequently ventured into the interior northern Yukon in the early 20th century, making this area yet another interface region. Another possibility, suggested by the Peel River people, is that houses may not

have been reoccupied from year to year, thus severing the connection with the village after one season. There are no doubt other reasons, possibly spiritual, for this failure to recall, but it is nonetheless significant that some parts of the inhabited landscape are never forgotten, being remembered with place names and stories, whereas others fade rapidly. Perhaps this fact provides some rationale for the input of archaeological work into local histories.

Chapters 4 and 5 offer detailed descriptions of the excavations and analysis of the data, respectively. The house construction data are complemented by historical and oral testimony, contributing to a composite of information about these types of winter dwellings. The author indicates that archaeology contributed missing information in six categories, whereas the ethnographic data supplemented the archaeological in three ways. Artifact samples were dominated by Euro-American trade items (firearms, clothing, tools, etc.). Faunal remains, though limited, represented all expected categories of game animals and fish.

In this section of the book, the author also attempts a gender-based study of the spatial distribution of artifacts and faunal remains within the houses. This study begins with an ideal model of spatial organization within houses that is based on elders' statements (figure 5.4). The author acknowledges that there are problems in such an analysis; she identifies recycling of items used by one sex into things that could be used by the other, and states that "the sexual division of tasks is likely to be inconsistent" (p. 144). A series of floor plans is used to show some correspondences. McFadyen Clark pays particular attention to the distribution of bear bones, as there are specific rules concerning their treatment that the Athapaskan people must follow: "no bear bones would be expected to be found in Athapaskan dwellings with women in residence, especially those who had not as yet reached menopause" (p. 159). However, bear bones were found in all the excavated houses. The analysis concludes with the observation that more knowledge of how interior space was used is necessary, particularly in terms of floor coverings and their treatment, before some degree of confidence can be placed in the linkages between archaeological distributions and specific behaviours. This is certainly true, and highlights potential difficulties inherent in this kind of analysis. In addition to the cultural factors the author mentions, we might also note that post-occupation processes may also intervene. In the short term, such intervention may involve reoccupation by a different group, but over time, the effects of natural processes may also disturb these relationships, often profoundly. Carnivores and small mammals may scatter faunal remains; the effects of tree root disturbance and tree falls may also alter these distributions. Over decades, centuries, and millennia, the cumulative effect will likely destroy the kinds of data that are amenable to the behavioural analyses attempted here.

The comparisons made in chapter 6 are wide-ranging and attempt to integrate these Koyukuk houses and their contents into the wider framework of Athapaskan ethnographic information and archaeology. I have little to quibble about concerning the faunal and archaeological data, but feel the author

is far too dismissive of data relating to houses from the Yukon and Northwest Territories. She states that, on the basis of ethnographic data, "Gwitch'in winter dwellings apparently were not true semisubterranean structures, although their floors were excavated to a depth of about 46 cm below the surface... Elsewhere I have referred to this type as depressed floor construction" (p. 169). She also suggests that many of the archaeological examples from northern Yukon and the Northwest Territories "may be caches." I must disagree with this evaluation. There are clearly differences between the Gwitchin (the spelling preferred by the Vuntut First Nation) houses and those she has studied, including the lack of "tunnels, storm sheds and entry passages," in the Gwitchin houses. However, the archaeological examples I am aware of from the northern Yukon and the northwestern Northwest Territories are clearly subterranean, some as much as 1–1.5 m deep, and far too large for ground caches.

So, in the end, who did live in these houses? Establishing ethnicity was one of the author's preoccupations, but doing so was more complex than it first appeared, since, as she points out, from "at least the early 1800s there was virtually no physical distance between these two ethnic groups [Athapaskan and Iñupiat]. Further...both lived in almost identical semisubterranean houses with tunnel entrances" (p. 202). Moreover, they shared a predominant use of Euro-American technology and are located within a day's walk of one another. Historical information, suggests that Lake Creek was probably occupied by Athapaskans, and likely the location of initial contact with whites (Lieutenant Henry Allen) or, as the author puts it, of "direct historic conjunction" (p. 46). Genealogical data also suggest that the house occupants were the descendants of a Koyukon shaman. The situation was a little more problematic for Kayak, although the author's genealogical studies point to members of a specific Athapaskan family. Okak was clearly more difficult because of the lack of any living memory of its existence or history. Local people thought it might have been Iñupiat, since the village was located in traditional Iñupiat territory. The author attempts to use knowledge of the ritual associated with bone disposal and bone distribution patterns within the house to determine ethnicity, but the results are equivocal. For example, as noted earlier, all houses had bear bones. These should not have been present if Athapaskan women had lived in the houses. The fact that the occupants of the other two houses were indeed Athapaskans leads to some possible explanations of the discrepancies: occupation by shamans, elders without children, males only, or nontraditional Athapaskans, or a time of deprivation, for example. However, the identity of the Okak house inhabitants remains unknown.

Technically, the book is good, with excellent maps and diagrams, clear exposition, and good-quality plates. The only problem is the binding: my copy began to disintegrate after one reading, even though it was handled with care. In conclusion, the author has used effectively her considerable ethnographic knowledge of this region of northwestern North America in her detailed study of these three small winter village sites. The work shows the complex level of detail that

can be achieved in using a combination of archaeology, ethnography, oral history, and historical records; indeed, it comes close to touching the past directly when it identifies specific families and their association with two of the sites. However, in its consideration of the Okak site, it also illustrates how quickly elements of local knowledge can be lost. Overall, the book is a significant contribution to Subarctic anthropological studies, and one which I, as an archaeological specialist in a northern Athapaskan area of Canada, am very pleased to see.

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BECOMING VISIBLE: INDIGENOUS POLITICS AND SELF-GOVERNMENT. Edited by TERJE BRANTENBERG, JANNE HANSEN and HENRY MINDE. Tromsø: Centre for Sami Studies, University of Tromsø, 1995. 247 p. Softbound. NOK200.

As we enter the third year of the United Nations' International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, international agencies, national governments, and organizations representing indigenous peoples have begun, often tentatively, to develop cooperative arrangements that recognize the special situation of the many indigenous minorities of the world. A number of initiatives have taken place in the Nordic countries, notably with respect to the policies of the governments of Norway, Sweden, and Finland toward their respective Sami minorities. Since the governments of these three countries have each chosen to respond differently to the demands of the Sami minority, it is difficult to discern a common Scandinavian policy on Sami-related issues. While the five Nordic countries have taken considerable steps to develop common programs and legislation on labour, health benefits, social welfare, and a number of other matters, there does not exist, at this time, any coordinated Nordic approach for addressing demands by the Sami as to their situation as an indigenous people. Nor does such a common Nordic approach appear likely for quite some time. However, a number of interesting developments in this region bear closer study.

In recent years, Norway has become a front-line advocate of indigenous rights at the international level and, with respect to its Sami minority, at the national level as well. It was a major proponent in the discussions leading to the adoption by the International Labour Organization of ILO Convention 169, the *Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention*, and was the first country to ratify it. Norway has also been a centre for public dialogue on indigenous rights, and a number of academic studies have attempted to address this situation. Norway is the only one of the three Nordic countries in which Sami activists, during demonstrations against the Alta-Kautokeino hydroelectric power project of

1979–81, directly confronted their government. This confrontation led to the establishment of a royal commission, which published its first (and to date, only) report in 1984. Recommendations from this report led to an amendment to the Constitution respecting the obligation of the Norwegian state towards its Sami minority and to the establishment of a Sami Parliament. The Sami Rights Commission has its third chairman and is currently examining Sami land title rights in the county of Finnmark. The fact that the commission has yet to publish its second report was noted in the remarks of several of the papers published in *Becoming Visible*.

In connection with the UN's International Year of the World's Indigenous People held in 1993, the Centre for Sami Studies at the University of Tromsø arranged a conference of scientists, politicians, students, and others with the theme "Indigenous Politics and Self-Government." Participants from Norway, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Guatemala and officials of the United Nations made presentations. This collection of the proceedings is well-presented and contains a number of excellent papers on indigenous rights issues.

Henry Minde, one of the organizers of this conference, tackled the very difficult task of writing an overview of the emergence of indigenous rights activities in the late 1960s and early 1970s, examining events in Canada, Australia, Scandinavia, and the United States and at the international level. Professor Minde skillfully weaves a common thread throughout his analytical narrative. Terje Brantenberg, another of the conference organizers, contributes a passionate analysis of current Norwegian policies with respect to Sami rights issues. The 1992 Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Rigoberta Menchu Tum, provides an uplifting address on indigenous rights developments at the international level—tempered by descriptions of the ruthlessness employed in many parts of the world for suppressing indigenous peoples.

There is an excellent summary on the development of Sami rights since 1980 by Carsten Smith, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Norway, who from 1980 to 1985 served as the first chairman of the Sami Rights Committee. Erica-Irene Daes summarizes how the UN has dealt with the concerns of indigenous peoples over the past 25 years. Douglas Sanders contributes a succinct analysis of how some states deal with their respective indigenous minorities and the potential impact of the UN *Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

There are also a number of fine papers on specific situations of interest to circumpolar scholars, notably, Frank Cassidy's analysis on indigenous rights and the Crown in Canada; Terry Fenge's overview of the 1993 Canadian legislation that will establish the territory of Nunavut as a homeland for the Inuit of the central and eastern Arctic regions of the present Northwest Territories; papers on the situation of aboriginal women by Connie De Vall and Cindy Polchies; and Harald Eidheim's presentation on the organization of knowledge in Sami ethnopolitics.

Some papers disappoint. A presentation of a somewhat gaffly quality by Peter Jull, "Through a Glass Darkly: Scandinavian Sami Policy in Foreign Perspective," proves