

**NUVENDALTIN QUHT'ANA: THE PEOPLE OF NONDALTON.**

By LINDA J. ELLANNA and ANDREW BALLUTA. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992. 354 p., 11 maps, 98 figs., index, bib. Softbound. US\$19.95.

The Lake Clark area of Southwestern Alaska is home to the Inland Dena'ina, whose primary settlement today is the village of Nondalton. *Nuvendaltin Quht'ana: The People of Nondalton* is a portrait of these Athabaskan people. It comprehensively describes their history and their current situation.

I have to disclose that I cannot be completely objective about this subject. The book's descriptions bring back the smell of spruce wood smoke, the taste of strong tea, the feel of the wind off Lake Clark, and the sound of friends' voices from years ago. I lived in Nondalton in the mid-1970s, so the book may speak differently to me than to other readers. However, that experience allows me to vouch for its authenticity and accuracy.

Much of the traditional territory of the Inland Dena'ina is a remote, diverse, and beautiful area of lakes, rivers, foothills, and mountains that was established as the Lake Clark National Park and Preserve in 1980. This area is wilderness by western standards. The book makes good use of place names, maps of historic camps and trails, patterns of fish and wildlife harvest, and family histories to document Dena'ina occupation and use of the area. It integrates information about traditional beliefs, relationships to land and resources, and economic and social organization in telling their story.

The authors set out several goals for the book. They intend it to be useful to the Dena'ina themselves as a record of their history. They expect it to help the National Park Service in educating its staff and the public who use Lake Clark National Park. They also hope to provide the lay reader with a variety of viewpoints on a different way of life. Finally, they aim to provide the academic community with a systematic ethnographic description and interpretation of the Inland Dena'ina. By and large, they accomplish these purposes.

Good descriptions of ways of life are difficult to write. They are in constant danger of swerving toward excessive detail on the one hand or of becoming superficial on the other. They often lean too heavily on theory and interpretation, or too far toward mere recitation of facts.

Linda J. Ellanna, associate professor of anthropology at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, and coauthor Andrew Balluta, Nondalton elder and former park ranger, have crafted a workable balance between these extremes. One technique they use is to provide a variety of perspectives. Alternating chapters present scholarly description, analysis, and comparisons, balanced against chapters presenting Dena'ina perspectives — stories or events told and described by Dena'ina individuals themselves, often in their words. These chapters are very effective in conveying the flavor of Dena'ina life.

The book is based on anthropological research conducted between 1985 and 1990, supported in part by the U.S. National Park Service. Unlike much research in northern communities, this was a highly collaborative effort, closely involving many residents of the region who chose to share their knowledge and their interpretations. The descriptive and analytical portions of the book cover standard ethnographic topics, ranging from language and demography to economy, social organization, and religion. They carefully integrate the historic dimension.

The book examines the dilemmas facing a hunting and gathering group that is becoming increasingly caught up in the larger market economy and society. It addresses issues such as the loss of commercial fishing permits, changing hunting and fishing regulations, and changes resulting from the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act in their social and historic context. This provides valuable insights and comparative material that will be of interest both to lay people and to policy makers.

Another theme is the strong degree of cultural continuity among the Inland Dena'ina in the face of modernization. Despite major educational, political, economic, and technological changes, the Dena'ina continue many subsistence hunting and fishing practices, retain some aspects of traditional social organization, and maintain many beliefs

and values, including a strong attachment to traditional lands and resources. Circular migration between Nondalton and Alaska's urban center, Anchorage, is mentioned as a modern form of traditional Dena'ina mobility. This movement, which clearly has major implications for continuing social and economic change and adaptation among the people of Nondalton, should be explored in greater detail in some future work.

The volume's paperback binding is of moderate quality, and the printing and reproduction are very good. The narrative is well documented with an extensive and thorough bibliography. A large number of high-quality maps convey much information about the spatial dimensions of Dena'ina history, environment, place names, and resource harvest activities. The book is abundantly illustrated with historic photographs that have not been reproduced elsewhere and are an important contribution. It also includes a range of contemporary photographs that convey a sense of Nondalton today.

One of the book's strengths is probably also its major weakness. It is packed with information about the full range of subjects — economic and social organization, politics, belief systems, and the multiplicity of human experience, past and present, that it takes to characterize the richness of Dena'ina life. However, that context and coverage also make it long and complex. The reader must work to get full value. But overall the effort will be well worthwhile.

This book is a valuable synthesis of information about the Inland Dena'ina. It thoroughly documents their culture history and provides a case study of a single group of subarctic Alaskan Athabaskans. Scholars will find substantial material for comparisons with other Athabaskans and other hunting and gathering societies. It contributes to understanding modern foragers in northern North America and throughout the world. Perhaps most significantly, when I put it down, I still smell spruce wood smoke.

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**SALMON AND STORAGE: SOUTHERN TUTCHONE USE OF AN "ABUNDANT" RESOURCE.** By BETH LAURA O'LEARY. Heritage Branch, Government of the Yukon, Hude Hudän Series — Occasional Papers in Archaeology No. 3. Whitehorse, Yukon: Yukon Archaeology Programme, 1992. xii + 117 p., 7 maps, 13 illus., 3 charts, refs. Softbound. Price not given.

The question of the apparent linkage between environmental resources and the organizational forms cultures take has long been of interest to anthropologists. The culture area approach to understanding the distribution and patterning of cultures is an early example in the literature. In northwestern North America, early studies stressed the social and economic consequences of sea mammal hunting on Eskimo culture, of anadromous fish, such as salmon, on the cultures of the Pacific Northwest Coast, and of caribou migrations on native populations of interior Alaska and Canada. For example, the abundant salmon fisheries were seen by some to be an explanation for the high population densities, sedentary village life, social stratification, and complex ceremonial life of Northwest Coast cultures. These generalizations are best understood as initial efforts at understanding culture areas with apparently distinctive features. Later studies suggest that this uniformity was more apparent than real, and at best an oversimplification.

Beth Laura O'Leary has undertaken an examination of the Champagne/Aishihik band of Southern Tutchone, situated on the Klukshu River in the southwest Yukon, Canada. Her objective was to study the relationship between an apparently abundant resource, in this case salmon, and organizational responses to resource procurement. O'Leary believes that three variables — mobility strategies, group size, and the organization of labor — are interrelated and dependent on the

nature, abundance, and distribution of resources. The author questions some of the major assumptions in earlier studies of cultures with rich salmon fisheries. Such studies held that salmon was the supreme resource, that in such an environment people became sedentary because this had greater survival value, and that the use or storage of this essential resource was for as long as possible. The implication was that a group would be tied to a specific locale because of the need to rely upon stored foods.

The Tutchone Athapaskans studied by O'Leary utilize the Klukshu River drainage inland from the coastal Tlingit and were historically blocked by them from direct access to the coast. The Klukshu River is a tributary of the Alsek-Tatshenshini river system and supports a rich fishery consisting of king, coho, and sockeye salmon. During the fishing season, this band of Tutchone lives in the village of Klukshu within walking distance of their sockeye salmon traps and upstream from most of the king salmon gaffing stations. The runs on the Klukshu River are heavy, and the Tutchone harvest, dry, and store salmon in relatively large numbers.

This has not resulted, however, in an increase in sedentary life or social stratification in response to this comparative abundance. O'Leary examines the reasons for this and comes to several conclusions. The numbers of salmon vary greatly from year to year, and the majority of salmon that do pass the fish traps and gaffing stations do so over comparatively brief periods of time. In a good year, half the total salmon run passed within 7.5 days, and in bad years, half passed in as few as 2.5 non-consecutive days. In addition, from year to year the timing of the peak runs may vary over a period of 16 days, and the numbers of fish available during a peak year may be 2.5-3.5 times those in a bad year. This clumping in time and space places practical limits on both the numbers of fish that can be taken and the number of individuals who can participate and, in addition, discourages members of other bands from joining the people at Klukshu Village to fish.

These constraints have also led to organizational strategies for efficiency, such as female specialization in trap ownership and preparation of the fish for drying. The distribution of fish is along informal kinship lines. It is noted that, as with many other Northern Athapaskan groups, the Tutchone possess a kinship system consisting of matrilineal moieties. These kin groups control marriage and ceremonial obligations but do not form the basis for more complex organization of labor or distribution of resources. Another factor involved here is the coincidence of moose hunting with the later salmon runs, requiring that small groups of hunters become strategically mobile while those band members taking part in the salmon harvest are residentially stable. One consequence of this is that by fall most of the game in the immediate area of the village has been depleted. O'Leary noted that a September-October run of coho salmon passes Klukshu Village relatively untouched, since the people have already left for fall hunting camps.

O'Leary stresses that while in terms of sheer numbers the abundance of salmon would appear to favor reliance on this resource and increased sedentism, the variable and unpredictable nature of the runs and their clumping in time and space all serve to reduce the numbers of processed fish available to the people. Based on the observations of O'Leary and the statements of elder Tutchone, the numbers of fish taken and stored were sufficient to feed each family and their dog team for from two to six months, depending on the abundance of the salmon run. While salmon are a significant economic factor, there are other critical resources, such as moose, which are widely dispersed in their territory. This requires seasonal changes from residential stability in larger groups during the fishing season (June-September) to mobility during much of the rest of the seasonal round. Dried salmon, being relatively light and transportable, can be carried or cached for use during these hunting and gathering periods, supporting residential mobility and smaller group size. Thus the seasonal round shifts from a situation of residential stability in comparatively large groups while utilizing the abundant salmon to one of small mobile groups in pursuit of highly dispersed resources the remainder of the year. The author concludes that "This idea of dependence on a single resource masks much of the variation and complexity of resource procurement systems."

Beyond its focus on the Tutchone utilization of salmon, this publication contains much ethnographic detail, adding to the work of earlier anthropologists (cf. McClellan, 1981). O'Leary presents an overview of the environmental setting and a summary of the historical and archaeological background for the area and gives a useful analysis of the relationship of the social organization to the taking and sharing of resources. A major emphasis of the publication is a detailed presentation on the harvesting and preservation of salmon, which includes a breakdown of government figures on salmon runs for the period 1976-80. Also useful is a section dealing with the salmon life cycle.

O'Leary successfully illustrates that, at least for some groups, the earlier generalizations of Northwest Coast cultures may obscure more than they illuminate. By examining the relationships of abundance and mobility in detail within a particular group, the author has added a fresh perspective to the questions others have raised about the role salmon play in the native cultures of the Northwest Coast and elsewhere. This publication of O'Leary's doctoral dissertation is a well-written and cogently argued monograph, and it is recommended as being of value to graduate students and professional anthropologists, especially those involved in research on Northern Athapaskans and the Subarctic. It will also be useful to others interested in ecology, particularly that of the salmon fisheries of the Northwest Coast. The book is illustrated with helpful maps, drawings related to salmon preparation, and charts. The quality of reproduction of the book is only average, and this diminishes the value of some of the illustrations. There are a few editing lapses, but these do not detract from the overall value of the work.

#### REFERENCES

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- OUT IN THE COLD: THE LEGACY OF CANADA'S INUIT RELOCATION EXPERIMENT IN THE HIGH ARCTIC. By ALAN R. MARCUS. Copenhagen: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 1992. Document 71. 117 p., illus. US\$10.00.

In the summers of 1953 and 1955 the Canadian government moved eleven Inuit families from the Port Harrison (Inukjuak) region and four families from Pond Inlet to new communities at Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay in the High Arctic. This episode occurred in an era when the Inuit were still called Eskimos and were dealt with as childlike wards of a paternalistic state. The Inuit went where they were told, and the government announced the project as a humanitarian success.

Much has changed in forty years. The people who were moved from their homes are now in the process of obtaining self-government under Nunavut. The federal government has abandoned paternalism, at least officially, as a policy suitable for First Nations people in Canada. Civil rights have become entrenched in our constitution. And the Inuit relocation plan, which may have appeared to be a reasonable experiment in social engineering in the 1950s, now seems like an antique episode that causes, or ought to cause, hideous embarrassment in official circles.

For someone new to the subject of government-Native relations, a young person grown up in the climate of Native assertiveness that has prevailed for the past two decades, the dismissive paternalism of a brief forty years ago must seem almost unbelievable. When Ottawa held its first conference on Eskimo Affairs in 1952 to discuss policies for the future of the Canadian Inuit, for example, no Inuit were invited to attend. Marcus quotes the official explanation:

The only reason why Eskimos were not invited to the meeting was, apart from the difficulties of transportation and language, that it was felt that few, if any, of them have yet reached the stage where they could take a responsible part in such discussions.