

"The shadows of the houses were lengthening, and the sandy lane through the village was deserted, ghostly. I had a sense of something stirring behind those doors, between the lines, beyond my reach." Likewise, it is not surprising that much of the richness, diversity, and complexity of Alaska Native cultures remains beyond the reach of this book.

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DICTIONARY OF ALASKAN ENGLISH. By RUSSELL TABBERT.
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US\$47.50.

The people of Alaska, almost all speakers of English as their first or second language, nonetheless have their own, sometimes unique, ways of speaking the language. A professor of English retired from the University of Alaska Fairbanks, Russell Tabbert presents us with an intriguing compilation of almost 20 years of residence and research in Alaska, documenting English Alaskanisms both current and past. His *Dictionary of Alaskan English* is a most welcome addition to the literature. Readers and writers in Alaska, and about Alaska, will soon find the *DAE* to be an indispensable component of their Alaskan collections.

Modeling his effort in part after that of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, Tabbert's is an historical approach, providing citations to the earliest known appearance in print of each entered term, along with a chronologically ordered sampling of later uses up through 1990. In line with other dictionaries of regional English, Tabbert sets for himself boundaries upon what is, and what is not, to be included among legitimate Alaskanisms. Items unique to Alaska are of course included, but he has ten further criteria that can qualify a term for inclusion.

Perhaps most noteworthy about Tabbert's dictionary is his arrangement of entries by semantic category, rather than alphabetically. Readers wishing to look up a single entry will want to start with the alphabetized Index of Words Entered, p. 285-294, where they will be directed to the page number on which their item is discussed. But most readers will find that looking up single entries becomes secondary to reading this dictionary. In line with many 19th-century dictionaries, this one is not to be used simply to check spellings and definitions. Rather, most entries provide a history of the term and a discussion of how it has been applied, how its usage differs in Alaskan contexts from its usages Outside, and, where necessary, spelling and punctuation recommendations are made. And of course, the meticulous citations give the reader a real "feel" for how the words' connotations have changed. The citations, furthermore, are often selected for their help in defining the term in question.

The arrangement by semantic category makes for inviting reading; one can simply begin with a topic about which one is particularly knowledgeable (or, conversely, quite ignorant) and browse through that section. Tabbert arranges the *DAE* into three parts. First, preceding the main entries, are: Preface, Scope of the Dictionary, Plan of the Dictionary, Key to Shortened Dictionary Titles, Key to Pronunciation Symbols, and Table of Contents of Words Entered. The reader wanting to understand Tabbert's rationale and system for organizing the *DAE* will do well to read through these chapters first. Particularly useful is to study the Plan of the Dictionary to gain an understanding of Tabbert's scheme — cleverly conceived if somewhat clumsily executed — for listing synonymous entries.

The core of the dictionary, appropriately but redundantly titled "Dictionary of Alaskan English," consists of 19 chapters: Not Alaska, Time in the Country, Regions, Race, Roles and Personages, Ritual, Food, Drink, Clothing, Shelter, Mammals, Fish, Birds, Plants, Climate, Mining, Transportation, Recreation, and Miscellaneous. The

most pleasant way to introduce oneself to this work is with a chapter of personal interest.

The work terminates with the Appendix: Guide to Some Matters of Alaskan Usage and the Index of Words Entered. For Alaskan writers and editors, the Guide will get much use. Long-term Alaskan scholars may recognize this section as the latest iteration of Tabbert's much-photocopied "A Guide to Editing Alaskan Writing," which went through at least four drafts in the 1980s.

Given Alaska's contiguity with Canada, Tabbert appropriately provides useful cross-references throughout to the *Dictionary of Canadianisms on Historical Principles* and other regional English dictionaries. His use of an Americanist phonetic alphabet, widely used by linguists working with languages native to the Americas, is helpful where used, although in general there is very little discussion of pronunciation. Those interested in survivals of Chinook Jargon will appreciate Tabbert's close referencing of 19th- and particularly 20th-century uses.

Tabbert makes some reference to what is most commonly called Village English, e.g., p. 191, where "Alaska Native English" is used to label the term "falltime." Throughout, where terms have been used by Alaska Native authors in print, he includes them among his citations. Yet a more rigorous, sociolinguistically more sophisticated approach to documenting the lexicon of Alaskan Village English is greatly needed. Although Tabbert is not to be faulted for something he does not really set out to do, the shallowness of Village English entries calls attention to this need.

Several entries are quite amusingly notable and of interest to Arctic readers generally. "America" is listed correctly on p. 34-35 as having an "[i]nfrequent jocular use" by Alaskans to refer to the rest of the United States, in contrast to Alaska. The neologisms "spillionaire" and "Exxon whore" were coined for people who accepted the high-paying clean-up jobs following the 1989 oil spill from the *Exxon Valdez*.

Tabbert's definition of the terms "Eskimo" and "Inuit" is generally adequate. Under the entry "Inuit" (p. 276-277), we find a discussion useful for the readers of *Arctic* to note:

Because *Eskimo* is of Algonquian origin and is widely, but wrongly, believed to have had the pejorative meaning "eater of raw flesh," some people are avoiding *Eskimo* by using *Inuit*, an eastern Eskimo form meaning "people." While this may be a solution for Canada and Greenland, a similar shift in Alaska is not without complications. There are actually four Eskimo language groups in Alaska: Central Yupik (in southwestern Alaska); Alutiiq (on the eastern portion of the Alaska Peninsula, Kodiak Island, and on the coast of Prince William Sound); St. Lawrence Island Yupik; and Inupiaq (in northwestern and northern Alaska). Of these, only Inupiaq is part of the dialect continuum called *Inuit* stretching from Unalakleet, at the base of the Seward Peninsula, across Canada to Greenland. The other three Eskimo peoples of Alaska do not identify with the name *Inuit*. Linguistically they are closer to each other than to Inupiaq. Culturally they feel, in varying degrees, that they are quite distinct from the northern Alaskans. In fact, the speakers of Alutiiq consider themselves to be Aleuts. Thus, it is understandable that Alaskan usage has not accepted this substitution of *Inuit* to refer generally to Alaskan Eskimos.

The terms Inuit and Eskimo themselves are not entered in the main body of the dictionary (not being unique to Alaska), but rather find entry in Tabbert's Appendix: Guide to Some Matters of Alaskan Usage. One unfortunate loss here is that entries in the appendix are not given with citations of usage. It would have been illustrative to the discussion of these terms, for example, to have seen Burch's (*The Eskimos*, 1988:13-14) use of the term Eskimo in its maximal sense to include Aleutian Aleuts along with all Yupik and Inuit Eskimos.

In any undertaking such as this, there are bound to be Alaskan lexical items that the author has missed, and Tabbert is the first to point this out. Here are a few omissions I have noted. I find it amazing that he does not have a discussion of the Alaskan noun "subsistence" but, rather, only the verbs "subsistence hunting" and "subsistence fishing." These phrases have quite often lost their "hunting" or "fishing" components and "subsistence" now functions quite frequently — perhaps more frequently — on its own. "Subsistence,"

in this Alaskan meaning, refers to what anthropologists have long called "hunting and gathering," as contrasted with agriculture or wage labor.

In his chapter on plants, Tabbert gives us many synonyms for northern plants and generally explains the uses of the words well, e.g., the two different plants called "salmonberries" by Alaskans. For the plant called "Eskimo/Indian Potato," he points out that the ethnic association derives from where the plant being referred to exists, that is, in Eskimo or Indian country. Surprisingly, he fails to do that with "Alaska tea" (cited with synonymy of Hudson Bay tea, Indian tea, muskeg tea, swamp tea): where are Eskimo tea, tundra tea, and Labrador tea (although the latter appears within one of his citations)? Under "Alaska cotton," I saw no mention of "tundra cotton." And where are our bearberries and baneberries?

Under "The Bush," I would have liked to have seen some discussion of its relative applications. It is an adjustable term, just as is the term Yankee. Outside the States, a Yankee means someone from the U.S. In the southern states, it refers to a northerner; in the North, it is a New Englander, and in New England, it is a Vermonter. And I've read that in Vermont, a Yankee is someone who eats real maple syrup on breakfast pancakes! Likewise, in Anchorage or Juneau, the bush can refer to the rural hub towns of Barrow, Kotzebue, Nome or Bethel. In these hub towns, however, the bush is often used to refer to the outlying villages. And at times, from a village perspective, the bush refers to areas outside of any village.

In his chapter on transportation, Tabbert gives an appropriately large amount of attention to dogmushing (Alaska's official state sport, after all). Yet the practice of flying small planes is underrepresented, with only three references (bush pilot, bush plane, moose hunter stall). For example, the use of "drive" in reference to dog teams is given, but seemingly Tabbert has found no reference to this same verb in use with travel by small plane (as in, "I'll drive to McGrath tomorrow if I can get gas for my Piper Cub").

Many entries of Tabbert's are certain to draw strong disagreement from some quarters. He discards the Alaskan English word "kashim" (an Eskimo men's house) with his "Writing recommendation: use *Qasgiq* or *qaygiq* for referring to Yup'ik contexts. Do not use *kashim*. Use *qalgi*, *qargi*, or *qagri* (see entry) for referring to Inupiat contexts" (p. 102). The problem here is quite analogous with that of trying to universally replace the English word "Eskimo" with "Inuit": what to do when a writer wants to refer to the people as a whole, or to the building and its institutions most generally? There is a genuine need in English for such words as "Eskimo" and "kashim," where their referent is meant to apply to more than just one linguistic group.

Outright errors are few. On p. 59, under a reference for "angalkuk" and other forms of the Eskimo word for shaman, Tabbert cites Ann Fienup-Riordan's 1983 *The Nelson Island Eskimo* (p. 58) and quotes her with "angalkut (medicine man)." Fienup-Riordan does not make his mistake of confusing Eskimo language plurals: she has "the inability of the *angalkut* (medicine men) to deal with the epidemics." Elsewhere, on p. 78, in citing a reference for "stinky walrus flippers," there is the misspelling "Rooom" (sic).

Tabbert openly encourages readers to find earlier references to terms defined: an interesting invitation. For example, he shows "(dog) booties" only going back to 1987 (p. 213); surely the dedicated Alaskan trivialist will be able to find earlier references in print. Readers are invited on page one to send additions and corrections to the author in care of the publishers in Juneau.

The publishers of this work are to be commended both for their bold use of recycled paper, as well as for their far-sighted use of archival quality, alkaline paper, making this a volume that should survive for at least a couple centuries. Some may object that at \$47.50 the *DAE* is somewhat pricey; for its uniqueness, quality of printing (both typesetting and archival paper), quality of scholarship, and quantity of fine reading, it is rather a bargain. It is regrettable, however, that the Denali Press did not produce a hardbound version for perhaps another \$20. Libraries (particularly in Alaska) will undoubtedly want to buy two or more copies and immediately have them rebound. At least two copies will be necessary, since this unique

book is so readable that at least one copy deserves to circulate. Indeed, this "dictionary" is so readable that it can almost be faulted. Looking up a single entry while in the midst of a research project can be dangerous; it can easily take an hour or more to "escape" and then one has to reconstruct what one was originally looking up.

As a reference book, the *Dictionary of Alaskan English* is a volume that demands to be on the bookshelf of every Alaskan scholar in fields from anthropology to zoology, from lacustrine comparisons to literary criticism. As an enjoyably readable compendium of noteworthy facts about Alaska, Alaskans, and Alaskanisms, the layperson with general interests will find the *DAE* a tome to be read and reread. I look forward to the revised, second edition of the *DAE* and hope to be able to buy it in hard cover, perhaps some time around the turn of the century.

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THE UTQIAGVIK EXCAVATIONS. VOL. I: THE 1981 EXCAVATIONS AT THE UTQIAGVIK ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE, BARROW, ALASKA. VOL. II: ADDITIONAL REPORTS OF THE 1982 INVESTIGATIONS BY THE UTQIAGVIK ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT, BARROW, ALASKA. VOL. III: EXCAVATION OF A PREHISTORIC CATASTROPHE: A PRESERVED HOUSEHOLD FROM THE UTQIAGVIK VILLAGES, BARROW, ALASKA. Edited by EDWIN S. HALL and LYNNE FULLERTON. Barrow, Alaska: The North Slope Borough Commission on Inupiat History, Language and Culture, 1990. 1224 p., maps, figs., tables, appendices. Cdn\$60.00 (3 vols.).

These three volumes report on archaeological work conducted from 1981 to 1983 in the northern Alaska city of Barrow, which is the modern outgrowth of an earlier village known as Utqiagvik. The first year of the Utqiagvik Archaeology Project was initiated to assess and mitigate the impact that construction of natural gas distribution lines within the city would have on archaeological remains. The work was contracted to the State University of New York at Binghamton's Public Archaeology Facility. The following year additional utilities were installed in Barrow, and the Public Archaeology Facility was again contracted to conduct archaeological studies. That year a remarkable find, consisting of well-preserved frozen human remains, was made by a resident of Barrow while digging in one of the house mounds (Mound 44). Controlled excavations at Mound 44 were started in 1982 and continued in 1983 under the sponsorship of the North Slope Borough. The monumental task of editing the numerous reports arising from these archaeological investigations was taken on by Edwin S. Hall, Jr. (general editor) and Lynne Fullerton (technical editor).

Volume I, which reports on the first year of the project, is divided into four sections. The "Introduction" discusses the background, objectives, strategies and parameters of the research. Rather than being a straightforward impact assessment, we are told that the goal of the Utqiagvik Archaeology Project was to put archaeological information within the broader context of Inupiat culture and history. In order to do so, the researchers developed and employed an effective sampling strategy that relied heavily upon coring to locate archaeological deposits and combined ethnographic, ethnohistoric, ethnoarchaeological and archaeological methods to interpret the data from the excavations. "The Excavations" describes detailed archaeological investigations in eight house mounds, plus tests in areas between visible house features. Far from being merely descriptive, this section includes information on sampling strategies and the spatial distribution of the archaeological remains, as well as observations drawn from the archaeological data on how the traditional driftwood and sod houses of Utqiagvik were constructed. "The Analysis" section