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KUSIQ: AN ESKIMO LIFE HISTORY FROM THE ARCTIC COAST OF ALASKA. By WALDO BODFISH, SR. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, Oral Bibliography Series, No. 2, 1991. 330 p., index, footnotes, photos, maps, appendices (interpretive notes by Inupiat [Eskimo] speakers and researchers), bib., glossary. Softbound. US\$21.00.

This book contains the life history of an Inupiaq (Eskimo) elder from Wainwright, an arctic coastal village in Alaska. A narrated life's story is transcribed, compiled and edited into a history of a person in his cultural and geographical context, preserving a record of an era. It is a colourful account that retains the personal and idiosyncratic flavour of the teller, bringing a unique and interesting perspective, refreshingly native and rich.

The purpose of the book is to preserve the history of a region and a people through the memories of an individual. The stories are full of references to famous people and incidents of the early 1900s, bringing alive history in a different way: through the eyes of the local indigenous person, a northerner.

The narrative is enriched by extensive chapter notes from two other collaborators in this oral history. For the reader seeking greater detail, it is there in succinct explanations and clarifications. But the narrative style is maintained in the notes, and one should read them along with the main text.

This book will appeal to the general reader and to those interested in anthropology, culture and language, wildlife and life "on the land." It is an excellent introduction to the North and the Inupiat, especially for the reader looking for a glimpse into Inuit culture and history and the changes in the North over the past century. It is also a glimpse into the history of whaling from the point of view of a whaler's child. Waldo Bodfish, the narrator, says: "I'm a half-breed: father White man and mother real Eskimo. My mother's first husband was named Kusiq, and when I was born in 1902 they named me after him. . . ."

There are little gems of cultural history spread throughout the book as well, dropped in as points of interest. Kusiq knows how to appeal to the audience; he is a good storyteller:

The shaman, *angatuq*, wanted to have my mother's first husband for his son-in-law, but Kusiq didn't want to marry the shaman's daughter. That's why the shaman killed him. My mother loved that man, and that's why she named me after him.

The book is divided into twelve chapters, each one titled after some point of change in Kusiq's life. Slightly over half the book is narrative; the balance is notes, appendices, glossaries and other sections the reader will find as interesting as the main text.

Kusiq represents a welcome new wave in literature, the expressions of cultural awakenings among native American cultures, the attempt to redefine the native world in written form, to recast history, a history for too long the domain of the white (or as we more politely say in the North, "Outside") system. But this is no insensible rambling of an old man. The team of narrator and collaborators has done an excellent job of putting into print the sharp memories of a keen observer of his world.

Unlike those dusty tomes of rugged British explorers of the harsh Arctic, Kusiq does mention by name the white travellers through the North. He does not say "and some White Man" but tells who it was. He also mentions by name his own people, and this must make this book a treasure for Inupiat from his region.

I think this book is a treasure for all who are interested in the North and its peoples. It is well printed on acid-free paper for the collector and should be a welcome addition to any library. Perhaps we will soon see other works from this Oral Biography Series.

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ARCTIC ODYSSEY: THE DIARY OF DIAMOND JENNESS, 1913-1916. Edited by STUART E. JENNESS. Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1991. 902 p., 208 illus. (maps, photos and drawings), appendices, index, bib. Hardbound. Cdn\$65.00.

This superbly edited volume brings into public view the complete arctic diary of Diamond Jenness, written during his three-year odyssey as the ethnologist for the southern party of the Canadian Arctic Expedition. This monumental volume is clearly the result of a labor of love on the part of Stuart Jenness, who started the typing and editing of the diary's three volumes in the early 1970s. As Stuart Jenness states in the preface, he had two major goals in publishing his father's diary in its entirety: "(1) to make its contents available for all persons interested in Eskimo activities, culture, and living conditions in northern Alaska and Canada early in this century; and (2) to offer a revealing glimpse of my father's personality and character, through his daily accounting of his adventures during the three years he was in the Arctic" (p. xx). Although this book does not have the poignancy and simple elegance of Jenness's *The People of the Twilight* (1928) or *Dawn in Arctic Alaska* (1957), both of which were based largely upon the anthropologist's daily journals, *Arctic Odyssey* constitutes an important primary document about one of Canada's premier ethnologists at work in a region of the Arctic just prior to the dramatic influx of traders, trappers, missionaries, and government administrators, who would ultimately and inextricably change the face of Copper Eskimo life.

After undertaking graduate studies in anthropology at Oxford University (1908-11) and completing a year's fieldwork in Papua New Guinea, Jenness had returned to New Zealand in late 1912, where he was recovering from malaria, a disease that would plague him from time to time in the Arctic. In February 1913, he received a cablegram from Dr. Edward Sapir of the Canadian Geological Survey asking him if he was interested in participating in an expedition heading for the relatively unknown Coronation Gulf region of the central Canadian Arctic. Despite having no arctic experience, Jenness accepted the invitation and prepared for his departure for Victoria, British Columbia, where he joined up with other expedition members. It was during the summer preparations in Victoria that Vilhjalmur Stefansson, the expedition leader, informed the scientific staff that all personal and scientific diaries, journals, and notes must eventually be turned over to the government at the end of the expedition. Jenness and other members voiced strong objections on the basis that such a requirement would unnecessarily limit their note taking to technical matters only (p. xxxiv). It is difficult to assess what influence this had upon the style and content of Jenness's own diary entries, but it is quite possible that the author may not have been as open as he might have been otherwise. Indeed, throughout the entire diary, Jenness reveals little regarding his personal relations with or feelings about Stefansson and other expedition members, although he is quite open in expressing opinions (good and bad) about various Inuit with whom he comes into contact.

The first part of *Arctic Odyssey* includes a prologue, which provides useful background information and outlines the first stages of the expedition as it heads from Victoria to the north coast of Alaska. The editor has done an admirable job in providing an overview of the expedition's organization, scientific goals, staff requirements, and personal relations among scientific staff. Several incidents of discord

between the scientific staff and the expedition's leader, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, are documented using published and primary sources. The diary's first entry is 20 September 1913, a day after Jenness left the ice-bound *Karluk* on a hunting trip with Stefansson, Burt McConnell, George Hubert Wilkins, and two Eskimos, Pauyuraq and Acicaq. The *Karluk* eventually drifted westward and sank off Wrangel Island, presumably taking with it Jenness's diary of the first stages of the expedition. Among the expedition staff who remained on the *Karluk* was Henri Beuchat, the French anthropologist who was to be the primary ethnologist for the expedition. He subsequently perished in January 1914 trying to reach land when the *Karluk* sank, leaving Jenness with the primary responsibility of documenting the culture of the Copper Eskimos of Coronation Gulf.

After a forced winter stay in north Alaska, Jenness and fellow southern party expedition members finally made it to their base camp at Bernard Harbor in August 1914, a year late but no less eager to begin their scientific studies. It is from this base camp that Jenness embarked upon his extensive studies of the Copper Inuit of the Coronation Gulf region, which would culminate in the writing of one of the finest ethnographies of any Inuit group: *The Life of the Copper Eskimos* (1922). From my own perspective as an anthropologist working on Copper Inuit ethnohistory, the most exciting part of this book is the period from 13 April to 8 November 1915, when Jenness parted company with fellow expedition members on the mainland to travel for the spring, summer, and fall on southern Victoria Island with several Copper Inuit families. In this respect, Jenness became the first ethnographer to observe and participate in the summer wanderings of an Eskimo group while completely cut off from the outside world. Although Jenness describes these experiences in his book *The People of the Twilight* (1928), the diary account provides many more intimate details of this experience. Not only does Jenness participate fully in the social, economic, and ceremonial life of the Copper Inuit with whom he is travelling, but he also experiences the uncertainty and starvation that are a characteristic feature of Copper Inuit life.

The value of this diary as a primary resource is greatly enhanced by a number of features. The editor has provided detailed maps, occasionally supplemented with aerial photographs, upon which are outlined the author's travels at various stages of the expedition. There are 100 pages of detailed notes in which information in the diary is cross-referenced with the author's published and unpublished records. The editor also provides extensive supplementary information that he has gathered through exhaustive archival research, as well as first-hand fieldwork in the Copper Inuit communities of Holman and Coppermine. (In fact, this reviewer first met Stuart Jenness while the latter was visiting the community of Holman on an information-gathering trip.) At the end of the diary, the editor has included an epilogue, providing an account of the subsequent activities of the author, fellow expedition members, and other persons met in the Arctic. Finally, there are numerous appendices, which include valuable archival information such as arctic collections made by the author, singers of Eskimo songs recorded by the author, photographs taken by the author, identifications of individuals mentioned in the diary, etc.

As one might expect of a 600-page diary, there are many sections that are rather uneventful and tedious to read. What the reader is being exposed to, however, is the raw record of expedition activities, including the laborious daily chores of hunting, cooking, sewing, repairing equipment, and learning the Inuit language. I believe the editor of this diary has done the right thing in deciding against abridgement of the written record. Any attempt to delete what might be perceived as the more tedious passages of the diary would be tantamount to tampering with the historical record. Spread throughout the diary, often amidst rather tiresome comings and goings, are fascinating observations regarding living conditions, the arctic environment, the fieldwork process, personal relations with Inuit and fellow expedition members, and Inuit culture and society.

In sum, *Arctic Odyssey* is a significant contribution to arctic scholarship, expertly edited by the dedicated son of a dedicated and eminent anthropologist. Given the rather high price of this book, I would not recommend it to those uninitiated in the study of Inuit cul-

ture or arctic exploration. For those people, I continue to recommend Jenness's timeless books *Dawn in Arctic Alaska* and *The People of the Twilight*. However, for research libraries and those professionals and amateurs interested in northern cultures and the history of arctic exploration (or the lives of great Canadians) this work is well worth the investment.

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WHEN THE WORLD WAS NEW: STORIES OF THE SAHTU DENE. By GEORGE BLONDIN. Yellowknife: Outcrop Publishers, 1990. 246 p., map, illus., photos. Softbound. Cdn\$15.95.

The appearance of *When the World Was New* is an event of northern publishing significance. It represents the emergence of a unique literary genre — a collection of written Dene history — presented in a comprehensive, readily understood format. It forms a living link between traditional storytellers and contemporary readers. George Blondin and his family have made a valuable contribution with this attractive volume. Hopefully, it signals but the beginning of an expanding Dene historiography.

These legends of the Sahtu represent the preservation, for posterity, of an art form that could well have vanished in the wake of seismic changes that have occurred in the Decho, or Mackenzie, region during the past fifty years. "Around the 1940's," says Blondin, "the great flu epidemics and the move from bush to settlements had a tremendous influence on the . . . storytellers whose role changed along with all the other major changes in the Dene world" (p. i).

The reader of these stories participates in the historic transformation of traditional lore — part myth, part fact, all true — from the universal wisdom of the spoken word to the irreplaceable richness of the written document. If some spirit is lost in the translation from spoken word to written symbol, it is not the fault of the author. Blondin brings verve to the linear that is closely related to the dynamic of the personal and the verbal. The book is, therefore, a very special gift.

In her foreword, editorial story-collector Georgina Blondin, a daughter to the author, reports that the text began as narrative. It was first shared by George and his now-deceased wife, Julie, while raising their four children. After 15 years of protected possession within the family it comes into the domain of many.

These pieces are not meant to be confined to the pages of a book. They continue to serve best as narratives to be told and retold verbally so that they may be remembered by their audiences. In the first place, they belong to the younger generations of Dene who have lived for some decades bereft of living, traditional storytellers. "Stories are so important to a knowledge of why and where you are going in life," says the author's daughter, "and, more importantly, who you are."

By extension, these pieces are also meant for a wider audience that seeks to feel the pulse and familiarize itself with the heart language of what is arguably the oldest continuing society on the North American continent. Here are myths that have guided and preserved a people for perhaps thirty millennia on Canadian soil. In the process of adding and adapting these stories to Canadian spiritual mythology, the entire nation and its people stand to be enriched.