

nation, do not undertake oral histories or ethnographies. Whether or not this is realistic or achievable remains to be seen.

Another aspect of the living/experience/knowledge continuum that this report makes abundantly clear is the indispensable value of a diachronic perspective. The North Slope Iñupiat, for example, are acutely aware of the ever-changing character of rivers as one of their most important attributes. Their knowledge of the complexities of the seasonal movements of caribou is also well documented in this study and again underscores the value of cumulative experience. The empirical knowledge of a particular culture is not bounded by the individual lives of its members — hence the meaning of oral tradition. This section of the report makes clear the fallacy of theory building and statistical modelling based on observations at a single point in time, without reference to historical occurrences.

Turning to the historical overview, I note with interest that E.S. Burch is credited as the primary source of information for the Traditional Past (1800-49), based on both historical sources and his interviews with many of northwest Alaska's most outstanding native historians. The native historians get no more recognition than this passing reference, something I find surprising in this particular report. The authors should also check the dates of the three bone artifacts from Old Crow that they discuss in this section, at least one of which has been found to be much more recent.

The historical overview, and the report as a whole, constitute a case history of Iñupiat adaptation in the face of external changes, and to describe it as dynamic is an understatement. This is also a story of persistence and innovation, as evidenced by one individual who became a leader in the coastal expansion of the fur trade when commercial whaling ceased. It is often only through oral history that we transcend the abstract processes of cultural change and discover once again that individuals are key ingredients in the historical process.

In the end, it is traditional and local knowledge that lie at the foundation of Iñupiat adaptability and persistence. This report demonstrates, as does history, that long after the agent of the dominant culture is gone, it is the knowledge of subsistence resources that has allowed the Iñupiat to endure with freedom and security. I suspect that the same is true of all northern aboriginal peoples. We can only hope that traditional knowledge will play an even greater role in mitigating the stress than many of these peoples are experiencing as a result of culture change in the late 20th century.

In conclusion, this report provides lucid evidence of the value of oral knowledge and its place in cultural evolution. There is nothing earth-shattering to read here, however, and some readers may even consider much of the contents to be mundane. But simplicity masks wisdom. It is both the contents of this book and the way in which it is presented that make it important reading for anyone with an interest in the circumpolar world. Similar studies must proliferate if we are to remain hopeful about the 21st century.

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GUIDE TO THE WILLIAM A. EGAN PAPERS, 1940-1984. By BARBARA M. TABBERT. Elmer E. Rasmuson Library Occasional Paper No. 13. Fairbanks: Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, Alaska and Polar Regions Department, University of Alaska Fairbanks, 1987. 17 p., illus., microfiche. Softbound. US\$12.00.

GUIDE TO THE MIKE GRAVEL PAPERS, 1957-1980. By BARBARA M. TABBERT. Elmer E. Rasmuson Library Occasional Paper No. 12. Fairbanks: Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, Alaska and Polar Regions Department, University of Alaska Fairbanks, 1986. 54 p., illus., microfiche. Softbound. US\$12.00.

Would that all the major Alaska archival collections had the extensive references to assist the researcher that these two resources have. Each guide begins with a brief chronological outline of the politician's life. Unfortunately these biographies, spanning the collection materials themselves, conclude with the end of the men's political careers — Egan's in 1974 (he died ten years later) and Gravel's in 1980 (he is still living). Given the men's considerable influence over both Alaskan politics and United States policies on Alaska, the reader may wish, and thus have to look elsewhere, for more detail on their political and personal lives. A further elaboration of the men's lives would have required that the chroniclers editorialize, when their intent was quite simply to objectively describe the contents of these collections.

Rather than requiring the reader to read through each "Series" description to understand the breadth of the collection, each guide, immediately following the biography, summarizes the materials in a short "Scope and Content Notes." This overview explains what materials occur in the collection, how the material is organized, and any limitations of the collection. Because the Gravel collection is more extensive, the cataloguers were required to include an additional category, "Record Group," found in the *Guide*, to their organization of the papers. This detailed arrangement serves to make the researcher's job of tracking down specific issues and events much easier. Both guides provide excellent detailed "Series Descriptions" of the materials, numerous photographs, and an additional container list on microfiche attached to the back cover delineating the contents of each box in the collection by series and subseries numbers, folder title, and folder and box numbers.

Some distinctions between the two guides should be noted. These differences are as a result of not only the differences in the amount and the type of material contained within the two collections but also an indication of the different times and styles of the two men. For example, substantial audiovisual materials for Gravel are contained in this collection (he was the first Alaskan politician to take full advantage of the media and sophisticated polling techniques), whereas audiovisual materials from Egan's lengthy career are not a part of the collection but are located elsewhere, in the Alaska and Polar Regions Department's Oral History Program. Furthermore, although the Egan materials extensively cover his Alaskan work (the researcher would also want to consult the official records of his three gubernatorial terms found in the Juneau State Historical Library), there is minimal information on Gravel's Alaska political work from 1957 through 1967. On the other hand, Gravel's bid for vice president in 1972 and his work on major Alaska issues of the seventies, including the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, the Alaska National Interest Lands controversy, and pipeline legislation, is quite complete.

For insight into Egan's private life the researcher will not be disappointed. The collection contains memorabilia from his personal and family history that "reflects Egan's 'down home' personality" and how this "'people person' who enjoyed entertaining visitors and colleagues" ably communicated an "informality as well as his policy of being easily accessible" to Alaskans. Besides a series on the celebrated Liz Ray scandal, the controversial Aspen House investment property and Denali City recreational tourist attraction, the Gravel guide offers little insight into what his collection might reveal about his personal side. Arguably these subjective reflections are the task of the researcher, not the cataloguer. The descriptions of the collections aptly demonstrate that there is a wealth of information for those eager to plumb the rich lives of Alaska's William A. Egan and Mike Gravel.

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