

the world, having 24 sounds not found in English as well as high and low tones on vowels. They use the popular alphabet designed by Gillian Naish and Constance Story (who also recorded two of the narratives in the book). This book provides an important model for linguists working on the production of bilingual texts elsewhere in Alaska and in northern Canada because it suggests that accurate transcription can be printed at reasonable cost. The cover by JoAnn George adds greatly to the visual attractiveness of the volume.

The title page notes that this is volume I in a series to be called *Classics in Tlingit Oral Literature* (also to be edited by the Dauenhauers), but there is no clear indication of what other volumes are planned. Royalties from this first volume are to go to the Sealaska Heritage Foundation, to be used in the publication of additional ones. If Richard and Nora Dauenhauer have made their objective the recording of literary classics, they have done so in a way that provides us with a classic work of scholarship written in a clear, accessible style. Anyone interested in native American oral literature or in the development of bilingual texts in indigenous languages will appreciate this volume and will welcome future ones in the series.

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LABRADOR BY CHOICE. By BEN W. POWELL. St. John's, Newfoundland: Jespersen Press, 1984. 2nd printing. 200 p., intro., map, 5 poems, 1 letter, and a comment by the author's wife. Softbound. No price indicated.

Today's world can no longer experience the lifestyle that Ben Powell loved to the depth of his soul and which is now virtually extinct. If Powell wrote this story strictly for the historical record, that in itself would make the book a success. He went beyond that. He describes, in detail, the compelling attraction of the hazardous, hunger-filled and bitterly cold occupation of hunting and trapping in the wilds of Labrador. Despite these apparent drawbacks, this kind of life got into Ben's blood and drove him to love every minute of it. "The most [intriguing] thing that is on a trapper's mind is wondering what will be in the traps tomorrow just around the bend of the river. This is what makes the game so interesting. It's not what you've got, but what you expect the next day or week." Many years later, after he had pretty well given up hunting and trapping, he spent a nostalgic day following his old, familiar traplines on a newly designed machine — a snowmobile. Writing of that trip, he said, "This was far better to me than a trip to the Holy Lands. It was like someone being away from home for a long time and then returning."

Powell has included a map with his story, which provides a ready reference to the area in which he carried out his hunting and trapping. It brings to his story a better understanding of the total district that he learned to love so well. One detail shown on the map is the location of his "tilts." These were shelters where he kept some of his supplies and where he would sleep under some sort of protection against the bitter cold, snow and wind. Some were much more sturdy than others, but none were large — only big enough for his rough bed made of poles, his backpack and his stove. On arrival at each tilt, the most pressing requirement was to prepare sufficient firewood to heat the tilt and his meals. This was an everyday activity and was carried out at whatever tilt he found himself at the end of the day.

Powell was first introduced to Labrador and hunting and trapping by one of his brothers. The first couple of years were difficult, until he became accustomed to carrying the very heavy loads that had to be carried, and this over difficult trails. The weather seemed to have no significant negative effect on him, even though temperatures would hover around 40 below zero, or he would be stranded in a tilt for several

days, or thin ice would provide instant icy showers. While he seldom met another human being on his trails, he was never lonely. The excitement of finding good fur-bearing animals in his traps provided the incentive for him to carry on. If he did meet someone, it was cause for a great conversation.

Powell was only 17 when his brother became sick and could no longer work the trapline. By this time he had been thoroughly bitten by the trapping bug and took over the responsibilities of running the trapline by himself. Right from the start, he wanted to get better organized. One project was to build more tilts and locate them one day's walk apart (leaving a little time for trapping and hunting during each day). This took him three years. There was a good reason and incentive to complete this project — he had heavy loads of supplies that had to be carried from tilt to tilt. The supplies and equipment that he needed for each trip give a good idea of the load he had to carry while on the trapline. Flour (into which baking powder had been sifted), sugar, butter, baking soda for burns, pork, rice and beans made up the grocery list. Add to that the spare mittens and socks, a watertight can containing matches, ammunition, needle, thread, a few buttons and some white cloth in case of cuts. The last items in the bag would be molasses buns, a bundle of wax candles and a bag of tea. "With your game bag full of food and a bundle of traps tied on the outside of it, your camp, stove, and a little strip of caribou skin to lie on at night, you would be ready to strike the trail." He never knew when he would be back home. He could always get game to supplement his diet while on the trail. One of his favorite foods was porcupine meat, which he would prepare by boiling in a pot or tin can.

Powell says very little of his activities during the summer. He indicates that fishing was standard procedure but he seems to dwell on the season from September to about April. In September, vast open stretches of water permitted him to travel in his 14-foot boat. As winter approached, and ice started forming on the lakes and rivers, travel became much more difficult. He would try a shortcut across a body of water that was frozen over, only to find that the ice was not thick enough, and he would wind up thoroughly soaked in frigid water, miles from his closest tilt. Depending on the weather, he might arrive at the tilt totally exhausted, yet having to gather enough wood for his fire before he could go about thawing out and drying out. Many times he was so tired he fell asleep before eating anything. During the winter this hazard didn't exist. When spring came, it started all over again. On at least two occasions, his whole tilt burned down around him while he slept, after building up a roaring fire to ease his misery.

Life for the trappers and their families along the east coast of Labrador was not easy when Powell first took up trapping. The communities varied in size from one to five families. Communication with the outside world, and among themselves, was almost non-existent, access to medical assistance was extremely hazardous and distant, and schooling didn't exist. As Powell grew older and less able to continue his trapping, he started directing his energies to improving the living conditions for his family and his fellow Labradorians. He was the prime mover in establishing a sawmill, a new community (near the sawmill), including the construction of homes for workers in the mill, the establishment of a school and finally the development of a medical clinic. The new village of Charlottetown was a concept dreamed up by Powell and one of his long-time friends one night out on the trapline. From the time of the dream to the completion of the village with its amenities, 25 years passed. By the end of those 25 years, trapping and hunting was no longer a viable occupation, and the world that had meant so much to Powell came to an end.

*Labrador by Choice*, by Ben Powell, is a very readable book that will appeal to everyone interested in life in remote places — the hardships, the joy, the satisfaction of being able to do what you want without watching the clock or obeying someone else's orders.

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