

A.F. KASHEVAROV'S COASTAL EXPLO-
RATIONS IN NORTHWEST ALASKA,
1838. EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
JAMES W. VANSTONE. TRANSLATED BY DAVID
H. KRAUS. *Chicago: Field Museum of Natu-
ral History, 1977 (Fieldiana: Anthropology,
vol. 69), 104 pages, maps. \$4.00.*

For those conducting historic and ethno-
graphic, as well as archaeological, research
in Alaska, early records, journals, and other
archival materials are of critical importance.
Although valuable information can be found
in the journals of Russian-American Com-
pany personnel, until recently a thorough
knowledge of Russian was essential for use
to be made of it. Fortunately, through the
work of translation and editing done by a
number of researchers — particularly James
VanStone and David Kraus, whose work is
the subject of this review, and Richard A.
Pierce — these once obscure resources are
becoming readily available in English.

The Russian-American Company initiated
several expeditions to the Bering Sea region,
for political as well as economic purposes.
In north Alaska they faced competition from
British expeditions in attempting to discov-
er a northwest passage. In 1826, Sir John
Franklin had travelled west as far as Return
Reef on the north Alaskan coast of the Arctic
Ocean, while Thomas Elson, of Beechey's
ship, moved north along the coast from
Kotzebue to as far east as Point Barrow. A
year before Kashevarov's expedition, Thomas
Simpson completed the exploration of the
last 200 miles of coast between Return Reef
and Point Barrow. In spite of the fact that
it covered the same ground, Kashevarov's
expedition was especially important because
of the much greater amount of geographic
and ethnographic information its members
recorded.

It had been realized that the use of large
ships to survey and explore the coast of
Alaska north of the seventieth parallel (near
Icy Cape) was virtually impossible because of
ice, the presence of many islands and the dif-
ficulty of distinguishing between straits and
inlets (pp. 5-6). The members of Kashevarov's
well-organized expedition travelled with their
ample provisions in five 3-hatched *baidarki*
(kayaks) and one 12-oar *baidara*. It was there-
fore possible for them to move close to the
shore and thus gather accurate, detailed in-
formation. The presence of a speaker of
Inupik facilitated clear communication with
the local people and the recording of detailed
ethnographic data.

The information Kashevarov obtained on
settlement patterns is especially useful; he

located definitely thirteen permanent and
seasonal settlements and tentatively located
another four. Of equal significance is the
documentation of the name of each Eskimo
group encountered, the number of persons in
it, and a comment on the language. If the
group was not in its permanent settlement,
he noted the reason; many small groups
were detachments from larger settlements
engaged in hunting caribou. The comments
Kashevarov made on the degree of hostility
or cordiality shown by each group toward its
neighbours provide one of the earliest sources
of information on inter-societal relationships.

In an article he wrote in 1846, which ap-
pears in translation in the appendix, Kashe-
varov provided a more general overview of
north Alaskan Eskimos and drew some com-
parisons between them and southern Eski-
mos. Using an early "cultural ecological"
approach, he attempted to establish corre-
lations between kinds of societies and the
natural environments, suggesting for example
that ecological reasons existed for differences
noted between summer and winter house
types. Kashevarov discussed plants and ani-
mals in relation to the seasonal round of
activities of the people. He described various
subsistence techniques, such as the hunting
of caribou, birds and seals, and the clothing,
personal adornments, armour, weapons, boats
and utensils. He also included some data on
social organization. In total Kashevarov pro-
vided an early ecologically-oriented work of
ethnography, containing population figures
and important information on the settlement
patterns of the north Alaskan Eskimos be-
fore they had had extensive contact with
Europeans. In so doing he established an im-
portant basis for later studies.

VanStone's preface and introduction, as
well as his notes concerning various points in
the text itself, are critical for an understand-
ing of the significance of Kashevarov's writ-
ings. They add considerably to the value of
the present publication. It would have been
useful if translations had been provided of
the Russian sources listed in the bibliogra-
phy; those not conversant with that language
could then have determined whether it would
be useful to their research to have a particu-
lar source translated.

An important, but not emphasized, point is
that Kashevarov was a Creole, not a Russian.
The Creole children of Russian hunters and
native women were sometimes taken to be
educated in Russia and afterwards sent back
to Alaska. The hope was that, as a result,
the Russian-American Company could ulti-
mately rely on the Creole population to main-

tain the Alaskan colony and thereby obviate the necessity of bringing in employees and settlers from Russia. While this goal was not entirely realized, a number of Creoles did make major contributions to their native country. Kashevarov was one of them.

Several years ago VanStone and Kraus translated and edited *V.S. Khromchenko's Coastal Explorations in Southwestern Alaska, 1822* (Fieldiana: Anthropology, vol. 64). The present volume complements that work. Together, they provide some of the earliest information on Eskimo societies along the Bering Sea, and are therefore of considerable value for anyone working on the historic and late-prehistoric periods of Alaska.

Joan B. Townsend

WE DON'T LIVE IN SNOW HOUSES NOW: REFLECTIONS OF ARCTIC BAY. INTERVIEWS BY RHODA INNUKSUK AND SUSAN COWAN. TRANSLATED BY RHODA INNUKSUK, MAUDIE QITSUALIK AND LUCI MARQUAND. EDITED BY SUSAN COWAN. *Ottawa: Canadian Arctic Producers Limited, 1976. 194 pages, illus., maps. \$11.95.*

This is a fascinating history of the transformation of the High Arctic as experienced by the Inuit artists of Arctic Bay and its vicinity. It consists of transcripts of interviews conducted by Rhoda Innuksuk and Susan Cowan and, in the words of the latter, the people speak "about themselves, about the community, about life as it was in the past, about the process of change they have undergone, about art and its place in their lives, about some of the issues and problems that are of concern to them now and in the future." The original statements are given, as well as English translations in an easy-flowing style.

The first part introduces the Tuniit who, according to current opinion, were identified with the Dorset culture, which thrived from 1000 B.C. to 1300 A.D., and were displaced by the Inuit who were a smaller, but must have been a hardier, race. The remains of the Tuniit's stone houses and some of their carvings are extant.

Customs before the coming of the missionaries and the changes after "God" displaced the "devil" are described. Stories, some quite exciting, are told of the power of the shamans.

The last of the eight chapters deal with the present: the role of the cooperatives; the advantages and disadvantages of snowmobiles; the inadequacies of "matchbox" houses built by the government; and, of course, the effects of industrial development.

Although now there is no fear of starvation as there once was, and many other conditions have improved, the reader feels in parts of the book a hankering after the old days. For instance, one artist reminisces: "I'm not against anything that has been done; but it seems it was such a short time ago that we were still living in our own way, and today when you look around it is all dying out. It's very sad."

Numerous excellent photographs illustrate the text and depict a splendid-looking people. Maps and footnotes give additional useful information.

It is encouraging to note that the present volume is only the first of a series that Canadian Arctic Producers Limited is planning, because there is a great need for educational material of this delightful kind. This need is recognized by the Inuit artists themselves, one of whom said in an interview: "I would like the next people who write books about us to understand us better before they write them."

One criticism: the book deserves a wide circulation and therefore merits a much sturdier binding.

Anna P.B. Monson

Books Received

THE ENVIRONMENT OF AMCHITKA ISLAND ALASKA. EDITED BY MELVIN L. MERRITT AND R. GLEN FULLER. *Springfield, Virginia: National Technical Information Service (Publication no. T1D-26712), 1977. 682 pages, illus., maps. \$20.00.*

THE ORDER OF WOLVES. BY RICHARD FIENNES. *London: Hamish Hamilton, 1976. 206 pages, illus. £5.25.*

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL: THE CASE OF THE NORTH PACIFIC. BY ORAN YOUNG. *London: Frances Pinter Ltd., 1977. 252 pages. No price indicated.*

TRUE LOWLAND, DEVON ISLAND, CANADA: A HIGH ARCTIC ECOSYSTEM. EDITED BY L.C. BLISS. *Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1977. 714 pages, illus. \$20.00.*